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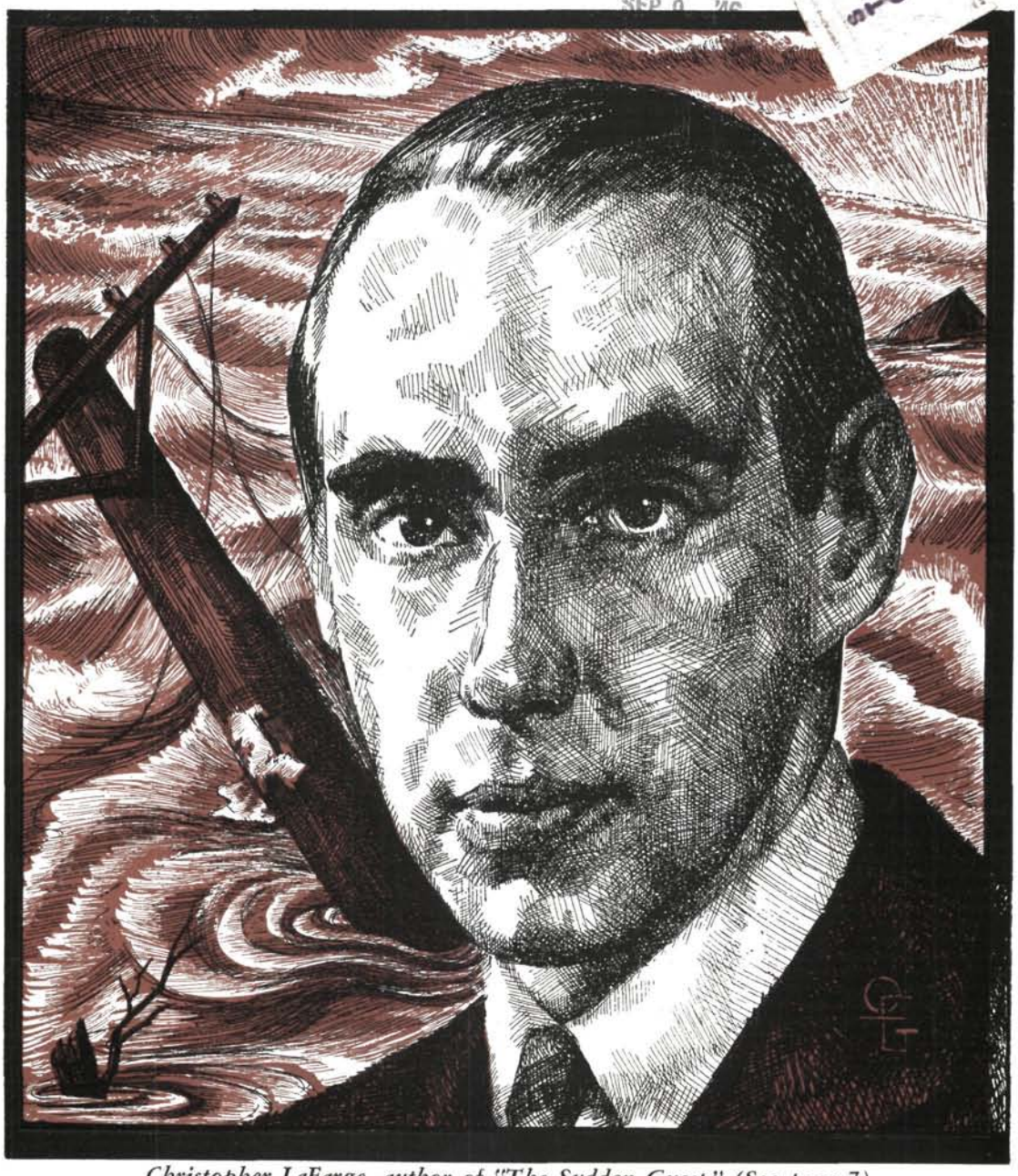

Christopher LaFarge, author of "The Sudden Guest." (See page 7)

Canada Between Covers

By HUGH MACLENNAN

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Who follow a dream...

AT LUNCH a few days ago we were involved in a discussion of *glamour*, a word connected in recent years with the subject of sweaters. When we got back to the office we looked it up in the dictionary. Mr. Webster says glamour is magic, "a spell or charm, as one which deceives the sight" (we have nothing against sweaters, either). He goes on to quote an instance of its use in the strictly magical sense by Scott and we were left to dream up pleasantly cock-eyed pictures of Lana Turner in the Arthurian Legends. Which was not at all what we began to do.

For us the province of glamour has always seemed to belong to those men and women who follow a dream, the ones marked off in any generation for a special kind of living which the rest of us observe with little stirrings of regret as we make our more conventional happinesses. Whatever they may be, crusaders, revolutionaries, artists, inventors, lovers, they apparently have a clear-cut single vision for which they are prepared to die. They have a disturbing and romantic appeal to those of us who like to mow the lawn and talk to neighbors and can't off-hand think of a thing we're anxious to die for.

This appeal, for us, has always been a characteristic of men who fly. They live with a difference. In BLAZE OF NOON, the new novel by Ernest Gann, there are four "different" men, brothers and crusaders, young men in a new world, because the sky still was a new world in 1925. Theirs is not the striking drama of the birth of aviation, but the less flamboyant, equally deadly business of pioneering a commercial airline. Roland, Tad, Colin and Keith begin as the barnstorming Flying MacDonalds, giving the cash customers at county fairs a chance to gape and chew their gum between rounds of sampling jellies and looking at the hogs. The brothers have a good life together. They are young—Roland, the oldest, for whom the fascination of flying is a hangover from World War I, is about thirty and Keith is just twenty-one. This first part is something of an idyll for young men, with the brothers living in perfect camaraderie, lying in the shadow of a wing and discussing life as they wait their turn to perform for the crowd, eating and drinking and singing and living together with their own sort of security. When Roland receives a telegram offering them jobs flying the mails out of Newark, this life ends. They accept the challenge of regular flight in any kind of weather with few aids but instinct. They begin a new way of life which they and others like them are to chart.

Later when tragedy strikes not once but many times it remains a way of life to which the brothers have dedicated themselves and to which they will stick to the last man. (In those early days of commercial flying sticking to the last man was not a figure of speech. Pilots could not take out life insurance because everyone knew they didn't live that long.) But they were people who couldn't do anything else because there wasn't anything else they wanted to do. As Mr. Gann tells their story it is alive and personal the way talking to a good friend is alive and personal. It has a tenseness and excitement which can only be found among people living hard in the present because they can't count on a future. It's a story that hasn't been told before and Ernie Gann, himself a seasoned pilot and a rousing good novelist, does the telling from the heart. A while back, leaving the Air Transport Command, he decided to retire from flying. He said he was going to sail his boat and write books. Now he is back in sky business, flying a Pacific airline. Perhaps one reason he can write such a fine and satisfying novel is because he too is a man who follows a dream.

Blaze of Noon

BY ERNEST K. GANN

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Canada Between Covers

By HUGH MACLENNAN

IN the course of the past few years, Canada has made the discovery that she is a nation. And this fact is reflected, as such facts always are, in the literature of the country. Novels written by Canadians, dealing realistically with contemporary Canadian life, are beginning to flow into publishing houses in London and New York, to take their place beside the work of English and American writers of today. For the first time in the history of their country, Canadians have begun to make a serious attempt to interpret their cultural, economic, social, and moral life.

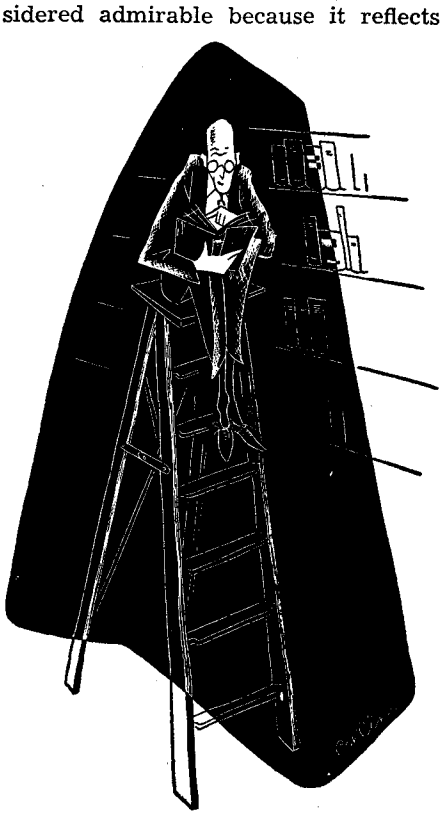
To Americans, who lost their colonial status nearly two hundred years ago, the only remarkable aspect of this literary growth is that it did not occur long ago. But in Canada, it has made news. To wake out of the long sleep of colonialism can be an exhilarating experience.

So we come naturally to the question: to what extent is it possible for Canadian writers, no matter how well their work may be received in Canada itself, to take place in the mainstream of world literature? Repeated in another form: is Canadian society so undeveloped, so close to pioneer origin, so innocent that its problems and spiritual crises can have little significance for the rest of humanity? In brief, is Canadian literature doomed to lie half stagnant in the backwaters of regionalism?

The longer I have wrestled with the situation of the writer in Canada, the more formidable this question seems to be. If, as Canadians, we wish to write for a world audience, how are we to bridge the vast gap that lies between our own social evolution and that of older nations of the world? Writers cannot decide by an act of will what significance their work will have. They cannot even decide what specific kind of work they are going to do. For good writing is the reflection of a writer's personality. It is to a considerable extent the reflection of the social and moral conditions in which the writer lives, moves, and has his being. And the social conditions of Canada, as well as Canada's history, are vastly different from those of countries which have produced the mainstream of literature in the Western world.

What is this mainstream of Western literature? In my opinion, it is just as important for American critics to define it clearly as it is for us. By examination, we will see that it is comprised of one main stream, with a powerful branch cycle developing from it. And then we will see that it is necessary to visualize these main and branch cycles clearly, for it is by reference to them—often unconsciously and usually without any clear definition—that critics judge the merit of a modern novel.

Since the time of Plato, critics have always tended to evaluate art, literature, and society itself by reference to a cycle of birth, growth, and decay. This historical approach has never been more marked than at the present time. Spengler tried to establish a whole theory of history on analogies observed in the cyclic development of the arts. Thus a crudely vigorous poetry, like that of Hesiod, is considered admirable because it reflects the spirit of Hesiod's time. A smooth, urbane work like Ovid's "Metamorphoses" is excellent because through it we sense the spirit of rising decadence in Rome.



Until recently, only one literary cycle has been recognized in the modern Western world, the cycle which had its origins in the Renaissance. It is the final, dying gasps of the Renaissance culture which have been heard in Europe during the last three decades of the twentieth century.

THIS culture was truly international. In spite of national boundary lines, the writing of Germany, France, England, and the smaller nations of Europe has in the main mirrored a society which for century after century held more or less common philosophies and more or less common points of view. Renaissance culture was the marriage of Christendom with the intellectual curiosity and restlessness of ancient Greece. Erasmus, heralding the Reformation against his will, was able to speak for all Europe. In the eighteenth century Voltaire could entertain disciples who had travelled to see him from nations with which his own country was at war. In the twentieth century, the exhausted decadence of Europe has been pictured with no national discrimination by Proust, Joyce, Mann, and finally by Aldous Huxley and Evelyn Waugh.

Fundamentally, this Renaissance culture was, as Lewis Mumford has pointed out, a culture of cities. It grew out of the city-states of Italy at the time of Dante and Petrarch, and it blossomed to its full flower in Paris, London, Weimar, and Vienna. During its evolution from birth to old age, it was reminded of its own past by countless monuments, public buildings, and institutions which preserved in visual and legal forms the memories of its greatness. So when airplanes dropped their bombs on Rotterdam, London, Rome, and Vienna, they were destroying a whole organism of thought, a way of life, a tradition which had become as much a part of the Western world as an old man's memories are a part of his

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consciousness, as well as a part of his dreams.

To announce at this point that the cycle of the Renaissance has run its course, that it is as dead as the pagan culture of Rome at the time of Saint Augustine, would be to make a daring statement. Yet it is hard to avoid such a conclusion. Even before 1939, the society which produced Shakespeare and Rembrandt had reached a point at which Céline and Salvador Dali were considered to be, not freaks, but interpreters of the life around them. It had reached a point where the concentration camp was accepted as a matter of course.

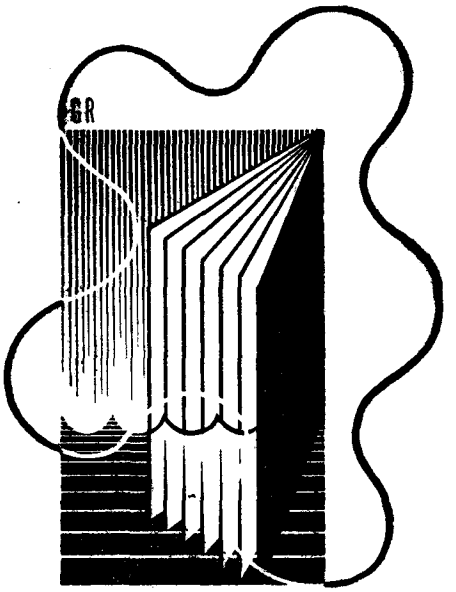
What has the mainstream of Western culture become, except a deep layer of soft mud from which the clean spring water has poured away? Europe may still produce books. But it is difficult to imagine that the novels produced by the generation which grew up in the present war will be a further refinement of the Renaissance spirit. Much more likely, they will reflect a semi-barbarism, a spirit of collectivism, with the harsh blare of state propaganda drowning all but the crudest nuances of criticism and reflection.

Modern literary criticism in the United States would show less signs of schizophrenia if it bore clearly in mind what this decay of European culture means. Whether we like to admit it or not, the evidence forces us to the conclusion that, socially speaking, North American society is now split wide apart from Europe. This is no insistence on a spirit of isolationism. Far from it. But it does mean that in culture, as in economics, America has now become the senior partner. It does mean that American literary critics should cease looking to Europe as a model.

IT is unfortunate that the laudable tendency to think internationally has played havoc with much of our literary criticism. In America today, the higher the brow of the critic, the greater seems his compulsion to confuse the issue. Constantly one finds American writers compared, to their detriment, with masters like Proust, Joyce, Gide, Kafka, and Mann. As a result of such irrelevant criticism, one finds serious American novelists and poets ruining themselves by trying to match, not the brilliant techniques of European writers, but the decadent spirit of the great masters of European decline. No wonder so many of the best-written American novels today deal only with peculiar fringes of American life, and not with its heart.

In short, American literature has formed a branch cycle of its own, a product of the society which has developed through colonial migrations from the original cultural pattern of Renaissance man. In this respect, the culture of America bears a very close comparison, once again, to that of Rome, which developed as a branch cycle out of the original pattern of ancient Greece.

This American branch cycle lacks now, and probably never will possess, the wonderful variety of the original mother culture. It lacks the subtlety



and much of the rich savor of the old world. But because there were no elaborate cities in North America prior to the industrial revolution, but rather a civilization of small towns, we have been able to absorb the industrial revolution with less shock than Europe suffered. The industrial revolution has destroyed many values everywhere, and it has blunted the esthetic sense, but in America it was not capable of destroying the will to live.

So we return to my first question: can Canadian writers take their places naturally in the mainstream of Western literature? The question now becomes: is it natural for Canadians to adhere to the decaying Renaissance culture of Europe, or to the American branch cycle? There can be only one answer. Canadians must write for the American market because it is the cultural pattern to which they naturally belong. It is their only avenue to a world audience. And yet by doing so, they must compete on equal terms with American writers. And this presents hazards which not even Canadian writers themselves fully understand.

At this moment in the development of a native literature in Canada it seems important to analyze these hazards. If it were only a question of whether or not a Canadian writer can make as much money as an American, competing in the American market, the answer would be simple. He could move to the United States and become an American—as many Canadian writers have done. But Canada is in search of herself today. She is desperately in need of interpretation, not only to herself by one of her own, but to the rest of the world as well. It is through the literature of any country that the world comes to know her. And there are Canadians writing in Canada today who are equipping themselves for that task.

So let us examine briefly the reasons why Canada cannot be dismissed simply as another region of the North American continent, and why Canadian writers must learn the qualifications of their task before they can complete it.

There is first the question of regionalism. In the broadest sense, all literature is regional with respect to time and place, suitable costumes, dialect, prejudices, beliefs, and local folkways. In this sense, even the "Oedipus Rex" is regional; so much so that a modern producer might prefer to edit the translated text into the most colloquial sort of English, set the scene in New York, produce it with modern costumes, and perhaps make Oedipus himself the boss of an oil company, in order to release the theme of the play from the weight of its regional trappings. For its theme is universal, applicable to all times and to all places. Even a Hottentot can have an Oedipus complex.

AS the term regionalism is used in literary criticism, it implies a theme which is derived solely from the locale of the story, in which costumes, dialect, characters, beliefs, prejudices, and folkways form the core of the whole book. Add to this list one more item—a source of conflict produced by a condition largely of local origin—and you find yourself dealing with a category which includes by far the greatest number of serious novels written in the twentieth century.

This kind of regional writing is an inevitable result of the scientific approach to life, the approach which breaks down the whole into its component parts and studies them at leisure. This is the kind of work which makes some people feel that serious novelists are sociologists at heart. And most writers today, unless they deal with historical romances, detective stories, or slick serials, generally find it necessary to begin their writing careers with novels of this kind. Canadians are no different in this respect from Americans.

Let us examine the regional novel further, in order to discover its relation to Canadian writing. No matter how skillfully written, if it is to

(Continued on page 28)

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When the Big Winds Blew

THE SUDDEN GUEST. By Christopher LaFarge. New York: Coward-McCann. 1946. 250 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

THERE are novels that claim a reader's attention gradually, there are others that capture it at once, and there are of course still others that never win it at all. "The Sudden Guest," in my opinion, belongs to the second and smallest class. And it not only commands immediate attention; it also commands immediate belief. From the moment we meet Miss Carrel Leckton in her Rhode Island house, preparing to ride out the hurricane of 1944, we never question the rightness of all that the author has to tell us. His manner is so sure, his confidence so complete, that we, his readers, are also sure and confident. His style, clean and direct and free of ornamentation, contrived beauties, or studied originality, is an instrument which carries conviction. Such instruments are rare, and are to be valued when met. So often, even while reading fiction that we like and admire and respect as a whole, we find ourselves protesting over some detail, "This is out of key," or "That is out of character." But there are no dissonances, to my ear at least, in "The Sudden Guest." Its parts are all harmonious. At one stage a sudden shift from the previously maintained point of view provokes a momentary question, but the author answers it by successfully executing his difficult maneuver.

The novel's plan of construction is at once ingenious and simple. The events of 1944 recall to Miss Leckton's mind the events of 1938. Riding out the less disastrous hurricane, she remembers the ruinous hurricane through which she lived six years earlier, when the waters rose to isolate her, when the elms crashed on her lawn and the fury of the wind made a shambles of her house. Facing the second storm alone, deserted for the night by her housekeeper and unable to persuade her chauffeur and his wife to leave their quarters in the garage, she assures herself that she prefers to be alone, and remembers with distaste the invasion from which she suffered during the first storm. Then her privacy was outraged, her stronghold was violated by the winds, and strangers came crowding in through the breach. Waiting for the second hurricane to reach its height, she finds that her impressions, sensations, and thoughts are strangely merging with those that belonged to the first hurricane; she finds that she is living in the past and present simultaneously, while the reader finds that her creator manages his time scheme, his shuttling back and forth between 1944 and 1938, with perfect skill. It is in the past that the real story of "The Sudden Guest" unfolds.

There were no warnings then, as there were to be six years later. The unexpectedness of it all, the complete novelty, made it almost impossible to realize what was happening. One was sure, then, that hurricanes did not occur in New England. But one was also sure that the day had begun badly; and badly it continued. First came Leah's revelation at breakfast that Herbert Golotz was arriving early that afternoon to ask her to marry him and go back to England with him. Miss Leckton had made it very clear to her niece that she did not approve of Golotz who was, according to her standards, an alien twice over, for he was at once a Jew and an Englishman. She had assumed that Leah had bowed to her wishes, but it now appeared that the girl had been seeing this man behind her aunt's back, that she loved him, and was determined to marry him with or without her aunt's approval. The idea of her approving, Miss Leckton told herself, was of course fantastic.

But then came the second shock of the day. The alien arrived, was completely sure of himself and of his position, asked for Miss Leckton's blessing, but declared plainly that, if he could not have it, he and Leah would have to do without it; and ended by leaving the house with the ungrateful and stubborn girl to whom Miss Leckton had devoted so many years of motherly care. It was Golotz who first mentioned the word that was soon to become so familiar. "This wind," Golotz said. "If this were the Bahamas, I'd say you were going to have a hurricane. The wind smells like it, do you see?" "But this is not the Bahamas," Miss Leckton said. "Fortunately." It was while Golotz was still in the house, too, that the advance guard of the invasion had arrived. Some people by the name of La Perche, whose automobile had run out of gasoline. The husband wanted to know if his wife, who was not well, "could set in here for a spell" while he walked to the nearest filling station. The wind was rising and his wife was afraid to stay alone in the car. "This is intolerable," thought Miss Leckton. Was there not a sign at her gate? It was quite explicit. It said "Private Road" and "Absolutely No Trespassing."

Leah and Herbert Golotz had gone, with her anger like a dark cloud behind them. The wind kept rising, shifting from quarter to quarter with ever increasing violence, while the barometer steadily sank, until there could no longer be any doubt as to the nature of the storm. And with the storm, during its successive stages, came the people, the strangers, the invaders, claiming refuge and hospitality as if it were their right. As if people had any such rights! protested Miss Leckton. All they thought of was themselves; no one thought of her. Each one of them was obsessed by what the storm had done to him. It never occurred to them to consider what it had done to her! What they were doing to her! First Birac and Mrs. Barber: a Frenchman who said he had been a vicomte, and an old woman who said she had been a trained nurse. Then Maude Cleever, very beautiful, and her baby boy. They, alone, would probably have been welcome, for Mrs. Cleever belonged to Miss Leckton's own social stratum. But it was Mrs. Cleever who shocked Miss Leckton most profoundly.

All this and much more that happened in 1938 Miss Leckton remembers in 1944. And, as she remembers, the character of a completely selfish woman is drawn in masterly fashion, stroke by stroke, feature by feature. The "sudden guest" of conscience may brush her thoughts ever so lightly after the second storm, but I for one cannot believe in her redemption.

In the face of it, "The Sudden Guest" is a remarkably compelling story that has for its chief subject matter one woman and two hurricanes, the woman being drawn with great skill, the hurricanes being described with extraordinary vigor and vividness. What more there is, behind the face of it, each reader must decide for himself. But I doubt that anyone will read this novel without being aware of other winds than those which lashed the Atlantic seaboard in 1938 and 1944; without his thoughts going to other "islands" than Miss Leckton's.

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The Dilemma of Stella

THE DARK WOOD. By Christine Weston. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1946. 303 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

THE germinal situation out of which this book evolves demands of us that we grant a crucial premise: that a woman may fall in love, utterly, with a man because he reminds her of someone else. This is a premise we may wish at first to resist and brush aside, but it is not easily denied. For it would be necessary to deny also that whole subterranean area of will and memory and compulsion which is the subconscious, to argue that love is strictly a one-time, sunshine thing. If you believe at all in the dark truths that the doctors from Vienna have unlocked, you will perceive the logic of Miss Weston's book and move willingly along with it.

Alec Harmon, whom we never meet, has been killed in Italy, and his wife Stella struggles now with the necessity of accepting an intolerable fact. She cannot do it, which is another way of saying that she is mentally ill, that she chooses to dwell in a surrealist world where the wish may confute the known. She remembers the feel of his hand upon her and the vitality of his presence, and she hears him yet crying to her as he did the day he left, "If . . . you hear I've been killed, don't believe it!" She will not believe it. Her friends gather about her and try to force her out of this stubborn immolation. They even get her to visit Italy; perhaps the sight of Alec's grave would drop the curtain at last upon the living past. She returns without having seen it, for she would not recognize its existence.

And thus, wandering in Dante's dark and withered wood of impossible yearning, Stella sees Mark Bycroft, and he is Alec again. Nothing else could have worked the miracle but the knowledge of Mark's being. Stella is brought back, like Lazarus, from the tomb, and is alive once more. Here one complexity ends and another, now external, begins. For Mark must of course be caught in a dark wood of his own. His wife Regan has found another lover and is working herself free of Mark. The Mark whom Stella meets is blind with pain; he can scarcely see her, and she clings to him purely in the faith that he will see. It is a tangled third act they play out together, steadily darkening in mood and heightening in tension up to the revelatory thunderclap that clears the air.

It is a subtle and mature book, and the best thing I can say about Miss Weston's writing of it is that the tangles and moods are all in her characters, none in herself. Any murkiness of style would have piled confusion upon confusion but Miss Weston's writing is everywhere crystal clear. She manages to follow every hint of motive or passion to its source and yet retain a cool certainty of thought and language, like a thread to lead us to sanity out of the labyrinth. She touches each character with a calm perception; it is never her voice that is raised, and that is responsible as much as anything else for the superb effectiveness of her novel.

Christine Weston's "tangles and moods are all in her characters."

Nelson Gidding ruthlessly uses "realism, unpleasant shock, license of expression . . . merely because it happened."

Double Atrocity

END OVER END. By Nelson Gidding. New York: The Viking Press. 298 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by Pfc. ARTHUR C. FIELDS

THIS novel is a slightly developed war-atrocity tale supplied with detailed descriptions. In its structure it follows the usual pattern of past war stories: complication, reflections on past life, philosophizing on the evils of the twentieth century, and final resolution of plot. It is a "Long November" and a "Never So Young Again" attempted once more. It is another of the "lost" years novels, about the men who were weaned in an era of depression and grew up to slip into a khaki suit. And it is full of the traditional bitterness so characteristic of this general pattern of book.

Dale Stribling, the hero, is captured by the Germans after his plane is shot down in Italy. After a slight interlude with some friendly guerillas, he is apprehended, thrown into an empty cell, and left to think things over. And think things over he does. He remembers his girl, his days at prep school, his estranged father and the parade they went to, and the dull artificiality of his post-college crowd —all these memories, amidst theorizing on suitable wallpapers for bathrooms and how women should react to cigars.

The book is full of such remarks as, "Dale . . . where are we going?" "Hell," he said, "I don't know. In a blind alley or a dead end, on a detour or no thoroughfare, maybe out on a limb, I don't know." Throughout the text are earthy men's talk, the language of the guerilla cave, and the obscenities of the cafes. When Dale Stribling tries to escape from his captors via the cesspool of a latrine and is forced to crouch beneath the seats, then even such remarks as "an artificial aversion had quickly reverted to a natural acclimatization" serve as a poor bracer for such a disgusting picture.

Mr. Gidding's is simply another war book. It says what they have all said and adds very little that is new. The only suggestion at continuity is Dale's constant apprehension concerning his fate. Perhaps to compensate for its other weaknesses, the story ruthlessly makes use of the weapons of realism: unpleasant shock, license of expression, telling all merely because it happened.

Realism certainly has its place in modern literature, but it must show discernment and discrimination. It must be more than a mere play-back of events; for if this book is to be our guide we will soon find the dictaphone running the editorial office, and the best-seller retyping the stenographer's notes.

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Christianity and Color

COLOR AND CONSCIENCE: THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT. By Buell G. Gallagher. New York: Harper & Bros. 1946. 232 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by CAREY MCWILLIAMS

FOLLOWING the general line of Gunnar Myrdal, whose American dilemma here becomes "the irrepressible conflict" between Christian ideals and the color caste, Dr. Gallagher has written an excellent primer for Protestants on the race question. Dividing society into hostile encampments, black and white, this conflict of conscience and behavior has made of America, in Ralph Ellison's cogent phrase, "a nation of ethical schizophrenics." As the discrepancy between the dictates of conscience and the rules of the color caste system are more sharply defined, the tensions for the individual become increasingly unbearable. If sufficiently prolonged, this unresolved tension produces in the white man a sense of ethical defeat which leads eventually to the abandonment of even nominal allegiance to Christian ideals. Once this stage has been reached, the white man becomes, in Dr. Gallagher's phrase, "ripe for fascism." At this point, he willingly gives allegiance to a Leader "who symbolizes the pagan virtues—virtues which are easier to practise than the ethics of Christianity. New tensions supplant the old, and he now ceases to be a passive victim of the race problem; he is an active agent in making the problem worse." The members of the lynch mob that recently murdered four Negroes in Monroe, Georgia—three of whom were not even suspected of having committed a crime—are much the same type of individuals, brutalized by much the same processes, as the "war criminals" who operated the Nazi crematoriums.

It is Dr. Gallagher's contention that the social tensions arising from this same conflict are no less unbearable than the individual tensions. "The conflict between collective behavior and collective conscience establishes a dichotomy in society which is as sharp and as devastating as is the conflict within the individual." Just as the individual ultimately finds the tension unbearable, "so, also, the elastic limits of the social process have been reached . . . the snapping of the cords of the social fabric already can be heard." To Dr. Gallagher, therefore, the present period in history is as decisive as that tumultuous decade which followed the Dred Scott decision. Furthermore, the "conflict within the individual conscience cannot be satisfactorily and finally resolved unless and until the conflict in the social conscience, which sires the inner dichotomy, also is resolved." By its very nature, this "irrepressible conflict" which is ripping the fabric of society to shreds cannot be sublimated; it cannot be ignored; it must be resolved by an immediate repudiation of color caste.

Dr. Gallagher concludes that "the Christian Church, which includes well over half the adult population of these United States, has not produced an ethical attack on color caste which approaches the vigor and virility of the attack launched by the American Communists." Since the Civil War, the activities of the several denominations in the field of Negro education have been "the only great, continuing, practical demonstration of an interest of American Christianity in the plight and progress of the Negro in this country"—a damning indictment but obviously a correct one. Dr. Gallagher sees some hope of redemption for the church in the pronouncements which have issued from the various ecumenical conferences which began with Jerusalem in 1938. It is apparent from the resolutions on the race question adopted at these conferences that world Christianity has finally repudiated color caste—at the rhetorical level. But the chasm which still separates these excellent pronouncements from the actual practices of most Christian churches and their denominationally supported institutions is still so vast that one wonders, given the urgency of the racial issue today, whether the church can be relied upon to spearhead a militant movement against all forms of racial discrimination. It would be my opinion that the CIO has accomplished more meaningful progress in this direction since 1936 than the Christian churches have since 1865.

Published in another age, this book might well have carried one of those old-fashioned serpentine sub-titles, such as, "An Inquiry Into the Theological Ramifications of the Sin of Racial Pride With Special Reference to Certain Christians who Pass Resolutions but Retain their Sinful Pride most Obdurately." Reasoning as only theologians can reason, Dr. Gallagher completely demolishes the ideology of white supremacy. Never summary or terse, the argument is copiously amplified in the best tradition of Christian exegesis, with numbered sub-paragraphs and the "Five-Reasons-Why-Sin-Does-Not-Pay" technique applied with remorseless, masterful logic. Like

—Laura Wheeling Waring: Frankie

Jonathan Edwards spelling out the doom of Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, Dr. Gallagher exposes the sin of racial arrogance. If arguments will convince the biased, then this book should kindle a fire under every board of vestrymen and selectmen from Hyde Park to Berkeley.

While an ethical attack upon racial arrogance may weaken some of the assurances on which prejudice rests, raising many questions and even prompting some social action, it will not get to the root of the problem in either its individual or its social aspects. If prejudice arises from stereotypes and if stereotypes are defined, in Dr. Ronald Lippitt's phrase, as judgments which do not coincide with the facts, then real insight is primarily to be found in searching out the social origins of stereotypes. Since experimentation in the social sciences has shown that stereotypes are not only inconsistent with the facts but frequently exist *in spite of* individual experience and observation, it should be apparent that moral exhortation will not bring about a correction of social vision. To borrow an illustration from Maurice Samuels, if I want to pick your pocket, and circumstances encourage me to believe that I may do so with impunity, it is apparent that I will invent reasons why I should be permitted to continue picking pockets as fast as moralists and educators convince me of the fallacy of each reason advanced. Somewhere in the process of re-education, I must be made to understand that society will not tolerate pickpockets. Thus what I miss in this admirable book is a more explicit recognition that "the racial question" involves more than a conflict of conscience or a moral dilemma; that it involves the functioning of a social order. I would say, therefore, that the real "defection" occurred with the rise of industrial capitalism in the modern world.

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Mr. Truman Makes Sense

TRUMAN SPEAKS. Edited by Cyril Clemens. Webster Groves, Mo.: International Mark Twain Society, J. P. Didier, distributor, New York. 128 pp. $2.

Reviewed by GERALD W. JOHNSON

THE ability to say nothing in a hundred thousand words is one of the most valuable accomplishments a President of the United States can master. It is no accident that one of the most successful, perhaps the most successful, of all Presidents, Calvin Coolidge, had developed it to an extraordinary degree. An able statistician once measured the public speeches and proclamations of Silent Cal and showed by actual count that he uttered more words in 67 months in the White House than Theodore Roosevelt did in 90 months, although T. R. has come down in history as an unusually talkative President. Cal had learned how to talk incessantly without saying anything; which is certainly one reason why he flourished exceedingly.

The incumbent, judged by the evidence of the present volume, is less adept. True, there is nothing here remotely comparable to Washington's Farewell, Jefferson's First Inaugural, or Lincoln's Gettysburg address; but Mr. Truman has a facility in making himself understood hardly exceeded by any of his predecessors. One knows precisely what he means and when he has finished one knows exactly where he stands on the issue he has discussed. Perhaps this trait is an asset; but perhaps it is destined to be his political ruin.

For while the exigencies of his office compel a President to talk without cessation, it does not follow that he must or, for his own good, should always talk plainly. The President must talk because one of the functions of a constitutional monarch that has accrued to his office is that of the Fountain of Honor. Sinclair Lewis once turned out a slim volume called "The Man Who Knew Coolidge," which has been relegated to a position among his minor works but which actually tells more about the Presidency as an institution than Lord Bryce got into "The American Commonwealth." It is a depiction of the superstitious awe with which the commonalty regards the office—a monument that has been dedicated by the President, a cornerstone that has been tapped three times by the President, a hospital, or a jail, or a county fair that has been opened by the President, is blessed among monuments, or cornerstones, or public facilities.

This effect is strictly noumenal, not phenomenal. What the President says on such an occasion is of small importance; it is not even the presence of the man himself that is desired. It is the presence of the impalpable concept known as the Presidency, transmitted through the man as a sort of vessel of merit, that counts. But this is essential to all high and solemn ceremonies in our political life, just as the presence of royalty is essential to give the ultimate touch of dignity to any state occasion in England. The current monarch is an able man, but he might be a half-wit, or as crazy as George III, yet what of that? He would still be the Fountain of Honor, and a cornerstone laid by him would be blessed among cornerstones.

But the King has a tremendous advantage over the President in that he is there for life and cannot talk himself out of his job. On the contrary, whenever the President appears he faces a horde of enemies all piously praying to God that this time he may make an ass of himself and sturdily trying to make it appear that he has done so, even if he actually spoke with wisdom and discretion.

Astute occupants of the office accordingly are accustomed to retain in their entourage some chartered Jupiter Tonans who can boom without giving the depraved and devilish opposition an opportunity for effective criticism. Occasionally they overdo it, to the grief of the intelligent. "The business of this country is business." That's from Coolidge. Prohibition is " a great social experiment, noble in motive and far-reaching in purpose." That's from Hoover. "Labor is the best customer management has; and management is the source of labor's livelihood." That's from Truman.

© *Harris & Ewing*

"Mr. Truman . . . has astonished the country by exhibiting a dogged courage that few expected of him."

But those who hastily assume that such specimens of high, serene, and mighty hooey are evidence of mental decrepitude on the part of the Presidents are jumping at a conclusion. Frequently they are just the contrary. When a man has nothing to say, yet is in such a position that he has to talk, sonority without content is the smartest effect he can achieve.

Surely, it is hardly necessary to add that not all Presidential speeches are confined to this category. At his best the President is the national *trouvère*, the creator of our American *chansons de geste*, chanting not the thing as it is but as it ought to be and by giving melodious expression to our ideals converting our history into poetry. "We are all Federalists, we are all Republicans." "With malice toward none, with charity for all." "Government of the people, by the people, for the people." "America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured." "Freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom from want, and freedom from fear."

Mr. Truman, they say, has dispensed with a hired Thunderer and writes his own speeches. This is not necessarily proof of his stature. George Washington made excellent use of a Hamilton and Andrew Jackson of an Edward Livingston, yet they were not small men. Probably Mr. Truman, as cares and years gather upon him, will revert to the practice of his predecessors, especially as his own style has few rhetorical graces and is, indeed, singularly ill adapted to the concealment of thought.

But possibly he may not. More than once he has astonished the country by exhibiting a dogged courage that few expected of him. Possibly he may have the unprecedented nerve never to conceal his attitude on any matter of importance. It must be admitted that he has been remarkably successful, so far. He has incurred the wrath of leaders on all sides, including even those of his own party, but there is not much evidence that he is unpopular with the people.

They can understand these speeches. There is no lift of the spirit in them, but they make sense. Truman came to the Presidency at a moment when to make sense out of the world as it existed was the most difficult of tasks. It is conceivable that his gift of intelligibility may be more valued by the country than would be the combined eloquence of Wilson, charm of Lincoln, and fire of Jackson.

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Where Was Mr. Nelson?

ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY. By Donald M. Nelson. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1946. 431 pp. $4.

Reviewed by ELIOT JANEWAY

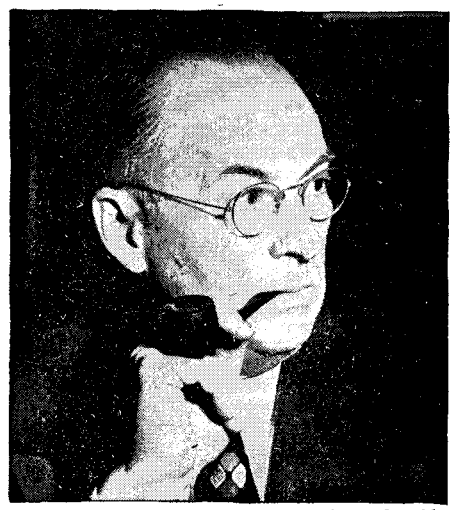
IN PUBLISHING this book Mr. Nelson invites comparison with Mr. Baruch as both an administrator and a student. By neither test does Mr. Baruch suffer. For he kept his administration of production in War I free from the intriguing and the promise-kiting which first compromised the integrity of Mr. Nelson's position and then exported him to China. Accordingly, when the time came for Mr. Baruch to publish his "American Industry in the War," he was under no pressure to deal in personalities or to justify his role as a Washington politician. He was able to give us not only a monumental record of his own pioneering work, but a manual which for years to come will guide students and administrators of the technical aspects of home front mobilization.

Now, when few tasks enjoy priority over that of analyzing the morals and mistakes of mobilization under Wilson and Roosevelt, Mr. Nelson's title and sub-title promise us that he has undertaken to study this unfamiliar and unsettling question in the classic manner of Mr. Baruch. But not only has he failed to produce a guide-book usable in future emergencies. He has failed also to provide a reliable history of the War Production Board, of the priorities authority, or of any of the other agencies with which he was associated. Indeed, he has not deigned to delve far enough below the gossip-and-glory level to describe either the system by which WPB actually functioned or the divisions through which it functioned.

His first paragraph sets a tone of petty inaccuracy which is sustained. January 13, 1942, he tells us, was to be the most eventful day of his life, the day on which he was made production czar. On page 7, this turns out to be January 15, on page 25 January 16, and on page 194 January 15, after all. At the top of page 88, he lists the members of the ill-fated War Resources Board, but excludes John Hancock, Mr. Baruch's associate, who joined it in its second month. In his next paragraph he speaks of Mr. Hancock as a member of the board, leaving readers to wonder how Mr. Hancock got into the act, leaving them ignorant of this crucial and fascinating chapter in the history of mobilization for War II.

Again, in the spring of 1941, says Mr. Nelson on page 142, "The Chrysler tank factory had an A-1 priority for an order for screw machines which were badly needed. These machines were ready to be shipped when someone slapped an AA-1 priority on them and took them away." But there was no such thing as an AA priority in the spring of 1941. For, as Mr. Nelson reports on page 363, this top priority rating was not introduced until 1942.

But Mr. Nelson's inaccuracy should not distract attention from his inadequacy. On page 155, he records the fact that "in August, 1941, it was becoming very apparent that the priorities system was falling down." But who was director of priorities? Mr. Nelson was. He held the job for six months after August, 1941, at the end of which time the priorities system had fallen a great deal further. Then, in January, 1942, WPB was created, and he was given power, as he says, greater than that ever held by any civilian except a wartime President to cope with the crisis dramatized by the collapse of the priorities system. Yet, by Mr. Nelson's own admission, the problem was not solved for still another eight months—not for over a year after his discovery, as recorded on page 155, that the job for which he more than any other individual was responsible was not being done. And, when finally the priorities problem was solved, the system that worked was evolved, as he admits on page 363, by his famous enemy, the Army, and administered by his prospective purgee, Mr. Eberstadt. Exactly what was Mr. Nelson doing in Washington all this time?



—*Wide World.*

Donald M. Nelson "has published the comic supplement" to the official war records.

A book of reminiscences too superficial to help students of the problem of mobilization could be useful for the record it bared of political manipulation. But on this level, too, Mr. Nelson's performance is as compromising as the record he is defending. On page 13, he tells us how he got the WPB job. The President sent word into a meeting of SPAB—WPB's predecessor—asking Mr. Nelson and Mr. Wallace to come to the White House. "I hadn't the faintest glimmering of what the President wanted to tell us," he says. On page 17, by which time he and Mr. Wallace had been with the President for "well over half an hour," Mr. Nelson admits that "I was completely engrossed but I couldn't help thinking in the back of my mind: 'What goes on?'" Not until page 20 is the suspense broken, and then only after Mr. Nelson has told us that "I was to get the shock of my life." He is to be head of WPB.

How does he react to this shock? Like any other successful conspirator. Three pages later, he has returned to his office to be "greeted by a rather jubilant group of my associates," whom he does not name but who were named at the time in every publication in the country as his campaign managers. They had advertised their drive to put Nelson across as "Get Knudsen Week." The campaign had been the talk of the country for a week when the President treated Mr. Nelson to the surprise of his life.

On pages 185 and 186, just before Mr. Nelson was made production czar, he takes us to the White House to meet Churchill, Beaverbrook, and Hopkins (with all of whom, by the way, he was then personally clearing his candidacy for the WPB job). He is not ashamed to tell us that he was "startled" and "alarmed" to hear the President say we would need 45,000 tanks and 10,000 planes. The President did not conjure these figures out of thin air. Everyone in Washington knew that he had fastened on them after studying data supplied by the economists in the organization of which Mr. Nelson was then priorities director and executive secretary, the very economists whom this program had inspired to campaign for Mr. Nelson as the realistic idealist who would carry it out. As production czar, Mr. Nelson was a failure. Priorities had been his jurisdiction, and this he abandoned to the Army. Purchasing had been his field, and here he abdicated. Protection of the civilian economy from militarism had been his slogan, and the civilian economy was the one claimant on production left without a program.

Mr. Roosevelt instructed all agencies and departments involved in the war effort to prepare the official records of their activities for publication. To this Mr. Nelson has now published the comic supplement.

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OLD CAMPUSES, NEW FACES

HIGHER education on a scale hitherto unknown in our annals lies before the country with the opening of a new college year and the entrance in numbers into our institutions of learning of the returned veterans. It is higher education fraught with a political and international significance such as has never existed before. For the vast army of youth which is to be its beneficiary is not the aggregation of callow schoolboys fresh from the playing fields which in pre-war times filled the academic halls, but an assemblage of men whose maturity has been forged in the holocaust of battle, who have lived experiences, learned techniques, turned a bright front to danger and hardship which have equipped them with endurance and initiative potent to make them a force for national thought and action.

Granted that many, perhaps most of the millions under arms in recent years thought neither profoundly nor purposefully. Still they have seen, they have suffered, they have known the friction of minds exposed to new lands and unwonted experience—they are men who have had a common discipline and concentration on a common end and who have formed the habit of working in unison. They want, no doubt, the majority of them, from the colleges to which they are going at national expense, not so much general culture as education designed to advance them in practical affairs, but they are there, youth, still malleable, still elastic to be shaped to the ideals and ends which must be the goal of the nation or else we must all perish.

We made none too good a job of orientation during the war years. And we stand in danger of doing a still worse one in peace time unless here and there and everywhere our educators and leaders of thought unceasingly agitate to form public opinion. For the climate of the nation has changed, and in the milder atmosphere which the cessation of hostilities has engendered the relaxed temper of the people tends to allow devotion to a cause to be dissipated into concern for personal ends.

There is today a twofold attitude which is twice dangerous—a tendency to retreat before the seemingly insoluble problems which block world accord, and a disregard of the fearful consequences of unconsidered and ill-judged talk about those problems. Visitors from abroad have expressed themselves as appalled by constant reference to a next war, by the press and popular treatment of the Russian situation, by the unconquerable American inability to grasp the reality of the horrors suffered in other lands. And they are convinced that only by driving into the American consciousness knowledge of the forces of tyranny and disruption still at work in Europe, and by making immediate to it the imminence of the danger that lies in any slackening of interest and coöperation, can the peace of the world be preserved.

Universities, traditionally conservative, have equally traditionally been the seats of propulsive thought. In monarchial countries, indeed, they have frequently been the source from which revolution is fed. In our free country today there is on them an obligation, an opportunity which must not, which cannot be evaded. They have capacity registrations, they have a student body in which the buoyancy of untried youth is balanced by the experience of a precocious maturity, they have a happy remoteness from the devastation of war which makes possible a measure of detachment of judgment and perspective of outlook.

It is imperative that the men who compose their faculties measure up to the need of the hour. They cannot be humdrum, they cannot be complacent, they cannot be fearful of new doctrine and speculation. They must be open to all the winds of thought that blow, and willing to allow the unorthodox its chance for a hearing along with the orthodox. There's no telling what may come out of the academic ferment—some few wild fellows perhaps who believe the world may be saved by daring and who have the courage to try for the impossible. It is the few who always spread the gospel. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding.

A. L.

Ygdrasil

(From an Iceland Beach)

By Ridgely Torrence

THE sky has gathered the flower of sunset.
The earth is red with the dew of slaughter.
The shores are ringed with the steel of onset.
Darkness covers the weaponed water.

The world-tree sickens beyond all knowing.
The worm is wasting the leaves that wreathe it.
The bough is drying; the sap is slowing.
Hatreds gnaw in their hells beneath it.

If those it shelters are those who fail it,
Its ground untended, its heroes breathless,
Their doom will follow whose evils ail it,
Their stem will die though the root is deathless.

The darkness deepens and famine harries
The lands that lie in the blight's bestrewals.
The heart alone remembers and carries
The endless Edda of life's renewals.

On one sole ground will the world-tree flourish,
On earth unarmored against its bearing,
Its glories free and its strength to nourish
The world wide lands in a common sharing.

In kinship only, with all earth gardened,
The ravished leaf may be stayed in thinning,
The stony ground at the root unhardened,
The boughs be green in a new beginning.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Really?

SIR: Something should be done about that word "really." Maybe I'm over-allergic, but it seems to be used more and more often in a thoroughly distracting manner.

I had some samples to send you but I can't seem to find them at the moment. I have a notion that I've mailed them to the gas company, because the check that *should* have gone to them is, unaccountably, still here on my desk. However I'll try to remember them:

"He looked at her with distaste trying not to see the tears in her really beautiful eyes."

"The conversation was boring, so he gave all his attention to the really excellent food."

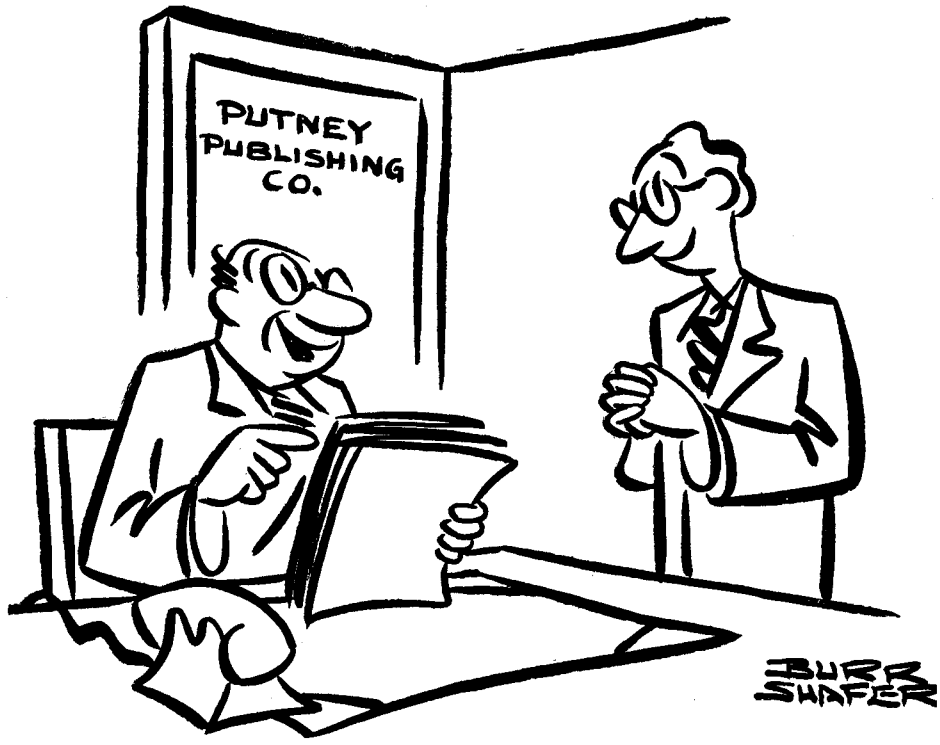
"I waited in the studio, idly turning over some of his really clever sketches."

It's a little like an actor suddenly turning to the audience and saying "Look here, I'm playing an awful heel in this show, but he has really charming table manners."

And it's also a little like an author sticking an editorial nose into his characters' business.

I don't know whether I've made this clear or not, but the ribbon seems to be giving out on my really darling typewriter.

EDITH GARFIELD BLANCHARD.
Tuckahoe, N. Y.



"It'll be a sensation! He claims Eisenhower wasn't even in the Army!"

"The Atomic Revolution"

SIR: It seems to me that the bilious, ranting tone of Louis N. Ridenour's review (July 20) of Robert D. Potter's "The Atomic Revolution" was ill chosen and uncalled for. After reading Ridenour's tirade I approached the book in a distinctly hostile mood, yet I found myself more on Potter's side than otherwise.

In the first place, I am sure I am probably better informed on the question than the average citizen—the "poor man" for whom Ridenour suggests this book is to serve as a "Smyth Report," "Acheson-Lillienthal Report," etc. I don't think that after a few years of newspaper editing I remain particularly thick headed or slow of comprehension. Yet I did not perceive any "writing down" on Potter's part for me to resent, and it has been some time since I "learned to read." Nuclear reaction and atomic structure call for generous amounts of simplification if the common garden variety layman is to begin to understand the subject, even if (and it isn't probable) he has a long forgotten college physics course on which to fall back.

Secondly, looking back through the book but without rereading it thoroughly I am unable to find the quotation ascribed to Potter ("to make an atom bomb is to slow down the neutrons so that they will hit and split the atoms of uranium 235") used in such a way as to indicate that the slowing-down process is employed in the actual bomb itself. It was implied the moderator material was used in two ways—as a tamper to keep stray neutrons under control in the bomb itself, and the Smyth report itself can be quoted for substantiation of this; and in the manufacture of plutonium in the so-called atomic piles.

In regard to the latter, I quote from a new book published by Simon and Schuster, "Must Destruction Be Our Destiny?" written by Harrison Brown, who at least qualifies as Ridenour's peer on atomic physics by having been one of the scientists who worked at Oak Ridge. On page 148 he says: "The function of the graphite in a plutonium production pile is to slow the neutrons down to a point where fission of U-235 is readily obtained without an undue number of neutrons being captured by the U-238. The important qualifications of such an agent, or 'moderator' as it is usually called, is that it should be capable of quickly slowing neutrons without capturing them."

In the face of this apparent misunderstanding, I am forced to wonder about the other "no fewer than thirty-three errors in fact" Ridenour claims to have found. I wish he had detailed at least half a dozen more.

I didn't notice the "breathless" tone that further offended your reviewer, nor did I count up all the "over twenty" more or less serious "blunders in interpretation." I do agree with his dissent from Potter's political conclusions, but at the same time I see no reason for making snide remarks about his maturity or mentality. Admittedly Potter's forecasts on the applications of atomic energy aside from the military field were rather on the *Amazing Stories* level. But from my experience with trying to trap readers into reading interpretative news stories or newspaper editorial pages, I rather admire his artifices to lure the general public to the not easy subject than deplore them.

I've never met Potter, never heard of him before, and know nothing of his background or qualifications as a science writer beyond what is given on the book jacket—and on that basis he seems better than average qualified. But I resented the denunciatory, snide personal attack on the author reflected in Ridenour's review—even before I had read Potter's book. I thought it really unworthy of the usually high standards reflected in *The Saturday Review*.

ROBERT W. SMITH.
Minneapolis, Minn.

Thought for Year MCMXLVI

SIR: One notes with pain that Mr. Mencken, in his "Supplement One," tolerates the expressions "World War I" and "World War II." Since so many people like them, let it be decreed that historians shall, in the future, speak of "Punic War I," "Punic War II," "Crusade IV," etc. Adam and Eve were "Human I" and "Human II." The Second Advent will be "Advent II." Washington was No. 1 in peace, No. 1 in war, etc. In one's pessimistic moments, one foresees emotional ballads about marching off to World War XXIII-B, or K-prime.

ROYLESTON DAVIS.
Denver, Colo.

Disapproved

SIR: The very loudest Fie
I vote for him (or her)
Who wants to say "imply"
And says "infer."

NANCY BYRD TURNER.
Brandon, Vt.

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Vigor Comes First

BELL TIMSON. By Marguerite Steen. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1946. 373 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by STRUTHERS BURT

INSTEAD of studying the songs of a nation to discover what a nation is, the social historian had far better study the vulgarities of a nation. These, in comparative study with the virtues and refinements of a nation, would enable him to arrive finally at a broad, but none the less just, assessment of that nation.

Music, even at its worst, is a nation at its best. Certainly, even at its worst, it is the production of the more imaginative element of the population. And what is more, of that imaginative element's least selfish and most self-forgetful moments. When it is fine—folk-music or sophisticated music—it treads closer to the mysterious, hidden portal of beauty than anything man knows, speaking an eerie, universal, fourth-dimensional language of its own. Parodoxically, it is as deeply national as it is essentially international, and so perhaps is the truest symbol we have of man's passion to remain individual within a circle of world-wide comprehension and coöperation.

Music, so far, is the only perfect league of nations man has been able to achieve.

But vulgarity, save for certain—a few—fundamental traits common to mankind, is largely national and indigenous. French vulgarity is not the same as English vulgarity. English vulgarity is not the same as American vulgarity. All nations are vulgar. It is not a question of degree, it is a question of kind. Vulgarity, moreover, is entirely unconscious, traditional, and instinctive. The vulgar man does not know when he is being vulgar. To the contrary, often he thinks he is being just right, and, if anything, refined and virtuous, and frequently he believes that he is exhibiting the finer characteristics of his especial nationality.

This is merely a preliminary to the statement that Miss Steen's latest novel is one of the most gorgeously vulgar books I have ever read. So much so that it takes its place as a classic, and should be preserved in the British Museum and the Library of Congress for the benefit of future historians. Now this is not, as it might seem, an adverse criticism. Nor is it by any manner of means a churlish or unfair national criticism. The virtues of the English are numerous and well known. Moreover, I am not using

Marguerite Steen's book is "gorgeously vulgar," yet "clean as a hound's tooth."

the word vulgarity in its present accepted sense, and as evidenced by innumerable American books. Boston will not ban Miss Steen's novel, and no one need hurry around the corner under the delusion that he, or she, is going to find another "Princess with the Golden Hair." The princess is *sui generis*, and lurks deep within the mind of our most disagreeable and, for the moment, most distinguished critic. Nor is this even a "Forever Amber." Nothing of the kind.

"Bell Timson" is as "clean as a hound's tooth," whatever that may mean. Knowing dogs, I have never been able to understand clearly the simile. What Miss Steen has done is to achieve a masterpiece of characterization, and it so happens that her protagonist, for whom the book is named, is an epitome of British vulgarity. From top to bottom, in every action, large or small, every motive, every self-justification, or unawareness that justification is necessary, she is it. The portrait is full-length. The varnish is that hard-boiled sentimentality characteristic of the English-speaking peoples, American or British.

This is a masterful job. One is a little puzzled, however, as to just how much Miss Steen is a critic and observer, and how much, at times, she identifies herself with her heroine. There is often a curious mixture of the objective and subjective.

Like all Miss Steen's novels this one is filled with vigor, and the power and drive that vigor, directed, begets. Once you pick the book up, you will read it. Lots of people will pick it up, and so, having picked it up, will, necessarily, read it. Having read it, their emotions will be interesting and varied.

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

A POETIC MENU

The tasty items on this week's menu were cooked up by Theodore Banks, of Middletown, Connecticut, and Agnes DeLano, of Washington, D. C., who ask you to name the poet and the poem in each course. Allowing 5 points for each correct answer, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, and 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 26.

1. Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
   Who please, the more because they preach in vain.
2. . . . . melons icy-cold,
   Piled on a dish of gold.
3. Beautiful soup, so rich and green,
   Waiting in a hot tureen.
4. 'Tis true, no turbots dignify my boards,
   But gudgeons, flounders, what my Thames affords.
5. A fat swan loved he best of any roast.
6. I only want a little bit of butter for my bread.
7. Cursed with appetite keen I am,
   And I'll subdue it,
   And I'll subdue it,
   And I'll subdue it with cold roast lamb.
8. Oh, herbaceous treat!
   'Twould tempt the dying anchorite to eat;
   Back to the world he'd turn his fleeting soul
   And plunge his fingers in the salad bowl.
9. While he from forth the closet brought a heap
   Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd.
10. For he on honey-dew hath fed,
    And drunk the milk of Paradise.

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—*Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.,* NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

"In a narrative so plain that a child will enjoy it, yet with double meanings as cruel and comic as any great cartoon, George Orwell presents a parable that may rank as one of the great political satires of our anxious time."—*Christopher Morley,* BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB NEWS

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TRADE Winds

THERE IS LITERALLY no end to the stories of Elliot Paul's early days in Massachusetts, and every time he deserts Hollywood to visit us at Random House he spins a new one. Usually they are so fantastic that anyone unaware of Elliot's unique qualities would dismiss them immediately as nonsense; when Paul is the hero, however, there is always a fifty-fifty chance that they really happened, and weren't merely concocted for our amusement on the way to the office.

On his last appearance Elliot suddenly bethought himself of the time a wealthy Boston engineer offered him free board and lodging in exchange for his keeping an eye on valuable equipment and instruments while the engineer was making a survey in Brazil. Elliot wasn't used to such lush surroundings, but the adjustment proved painless.

A week or so after his installation he was toying with an elaborate slide-rule when the old Negro caretaker hobbled by. Elliot had one of his sudden brain-storms. "This is a wonderful contrivance," he said pleasantly, "and after endless experimentation, I have learned how to use it. Leroy, if you will give me your physical measurements, I will tell you exactly how many more times you will fall in love in your lifetime."

Leroy regarded him with acute suspicion, but was reassured by Elliot's blandest and most innocent look. In a fever of anticipation, he produced a ruler, stripped, and measured himself from head to foot. Paul gravely made note of the statistics, and, while Leroy regarded him anxiously, made a series of mysterious calculations on the slide-rule. Then he closed his eyes, rubbed his forehead with the tips of his fingers, and pronounced solemnly, "Leroy, you are going to be in love 313 more times before you die." Leroy, sixty if he was a day, was understandably delighted. Elliot envisaged a bonanza.

"It was a pleasure to compile these statistics for you as a friend, Leroy," he said, "but obviously the strain is too great on me to continue doing them for others for nothing. If you have any very close friends, however, who would appreciate learning similar facts about themselves, I will conduct the necessary research for five dollars a head."

Leroy thought the proposition was reasonable and so did his friends. Elliot was always generous in his estimates, and thoroughly satisfied customers began spreading his fame throughout Boston. There is no telling what a fortune he might have piled up had not the engineer come home suddenly to find him in the middle of computing one naked patron's potentialities on the slide-rule, with four others waiting impatiently in the drawing-room. "That man had absolutely no imagination," says Elliot. "He threw me out!" . . .

HERE IS ANOTHER story contributed by Elliot Paul. Two cockneys were riding up to London on the morning train when they spied a dignified old party on the bench opposite immersed in his morning *Times*. "Bli' me," said one in awe. "It's the Archbishop of York." "Ye're cuckoo," scoffed the other. After heated discussion, they bet a quid on it. "Only one way to find out," said the first. "I'll ask 'im!"

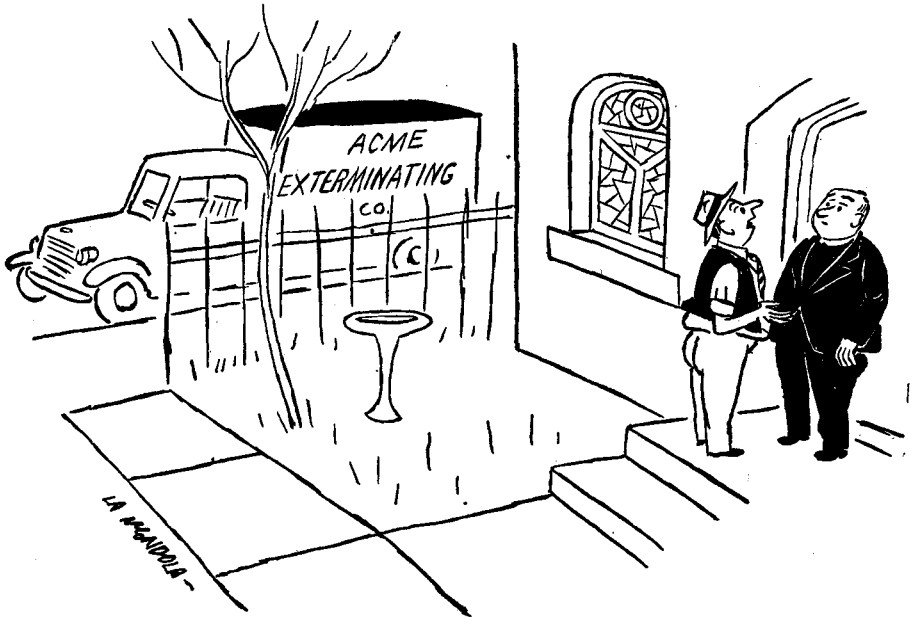
He poked the old party vigorously in the back, and said, "Beg pardon, mate, but, to settle a bet, are you not the Archbishop of York?" The old man put down his paper angrily and said very distinctly, "What the blank blank do you mean by bothering me this way? Buzz off, you blank blank blank, before I pull the bell-cord."

The cockney resumed his seat with a puzzled air, and admitted, "I still dunno whether it's the archbishop or not. 'E wouldn't tell me!" . . .

QUAKERESS Jessamyn West McPherson, of "Friendly Persuasion" fame, is basing an opera libretto on the life of Audubon. . . . Thomas Lamont, writing from Maine to say he could not come down for the Shaw Ninetieth Birthday Dinner, added: "Sometime you must let me tell you how Mrs. Patrick Campbell tried to get me to buy Shaw's letters to her; also how Shaw himself, the Socialist, scolded my chauffeur in New York about my old-fashioned limousine. 'It runs all right,' said Mr. Shaw, 'but for a capitalist to have such an old car is a disgrace.'" . . . No time like the present, Mr. Lamont. . . . Anthony Boucher, visiting the Simon & Schuster offices, ran into an author who was planning a trip to Central America, and distinctly heard Elinor Green remark, "Well, that's the way it is—here today, Guatemala." . . .

BLAKISTON'S new anthology of "Famous Plays of Crime and Detection" includes such time-hallowed thrillers as "Sherlock Holmes," "Seven Keys to Baldpate," "Within the Law," "On Trial," "Broadway," "The Bat," and "Angel Street." In their foreword, the editors remark:

> It is hard to believe that in a period when mystery and murder stories in book form are selling four or five times better than they ever did before, and when the hills of Hollywood are echoing the horrendous shrieks of countless motion picture gang molls, zombies, hatchet men, and monsters (all of whom look suspiciously like Boris Karloff), there should not be a single play of this genre on the Broadway boards. In the past three years, in fact, with the public prosperous and thrill-hungry, literally begging for cops-and-robbers, body-in-the-closet entertainment, all that the legitimate theatre has been able to whip up was one single exhibit, "Ten Little Indians," so feeble in comparison with the stalwarts in this collection that we never even considered it for inclusion.



"Do you have any bats in your belfry?"

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"Very good, Rotonga—now spell horse!"

On behalf of those countless theatre-goers who prefer an old-fashioned murder to a revival of "Blossom Time" and a bony hand reaching out of a panelled wall to the fleshy thigh of a blasé strip-tease artiste, we have assembled these thirteen thrillers of earlier and more crime-conscious days in the theatre. We hope that the public will make such a fuss over them that at least one competent playwright will decide it's high time to make another killing. Our motto is "More Corpses and Less Corps de Ballet!"

And so we turn you over to John Chapman, who will provide the footnotes on the thirteen thrillers in this collection, and then to the plays themselves, superlative examples, we believe, of the school of drama made to order for audiences who want to hiss and tell. They stand up well. Most of them are as thrilling in book form as they were on the stage. The proofreader of this volume was so carried away by the contents, in fact, that it took him three days to get back.

Off with the house lights (except the lamp over your shoulder)! Silence, please (except the creak on the stair and the low moan of the wind outside)! Settle down for the evening with a good crook! . . .

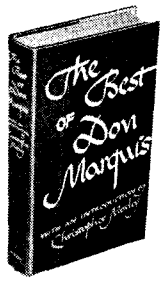
AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS who think they have troubles might give a moment's thought to the plight of their brethren in the Far East. Their stocks already depleted by the ravages of war and the shortage of shipping space, oriental book merchants must now contend with a plague of giant cockroaches which find the gum on bindings an irresistible delicacy, and can eat their way through an entire counter display in a single night. The cockroaches thrive particularly in the European section of Hong Kong, reports the *London Bookseller* (without vouchsafing any explanation for the peculiarity), and measures taken to eliminate the pests, "such as the use of varnish," have apparently succeeded only in ruining the books completely. Mr. Evan Pughe, of Simpkins, is coming to the rescue, however. He is "investigating new insecticides developed during the war," and promises sure death to cockroaches, and a reprieve for literature, by the end of the year. . . . Additional names for Percival Wilde's chickens continue to arrive. Harry Snyderman suggests Fryer Tuck, Ku Klux, and Hatcher Hughes. Bella Krasne says, "How about Turhen Bay, Beaudelayer, Peck and Peck, Wing Lardner—and Casanova?" Isabelle Evans wins the Pulletser prize with "The Brooders Karamazov." . . . Bobbs-Merrill report that Dr. Alfred Leland Crabb's fourth book with a Nashville setting, "Lodging at the Saint Cloud," is selling faster than any of the three that preceded it, and that Malcolm Bingay, living up to a promise made in a rash moment, has already autographed over 10,000 copies of "Detroit Is My Own Home Town" for local admirers. Bingay's "Good Morning" column in the *Detroit Free Press* is a highlight of that paper, and I even like it when he is taking the *SRL* over the coals (usually with good reason) for assigning certain books to obviously biased reviewers. . . .

CHARLIE MORTON relays the story of the city fisherman who tried to persuade his Canadian guide to visit him in the big town. The guide refused, saying "Aw, the city people would laugh at me." The fisherman assured him that no such thing would occur. "Why not?" asked the guide. "I sure laugh at them when they come up here!"

BENNETT CERF.

"From where I sit"

HUMOR has gotten out of hand lately, or it could be said that the reverse is true and that the hand which writes has gotten out of humor (Doubleday authors excepted, of course). It must be that the general tension in the world is of the depressent kind rather than the on-the-go kind, for the output of humor has become rather tense and psychiatric and there doesn't seem to be the rather fumbling kind of humanity we find in DON MARQUIS.



Here now is a collection of the best known works of DON MARQUIS, including *Archy and Mehitabel, The Old Soak, Prefaces, The Almost Perfect State,* and many other selections of prose and verse. The whole assemblage is called **The Best of Don Marquis.**

This juicy volume is introduced with a penetrating essay by his good friend, Christopher Morley, a very personal and serious essay, albeit a humorous one. I'm always shooting off my mouth about what kind of a world this is. I want to add right here, that among other things this is a world in which too damn many people think that the thing to do is to know some famous person "intimately." Well, intimately doesn't mean anything more now than some of the "famous" people who are so known. And when I say that Christopher Morley knows MARQUIS intimately, I mean he knows him and evaluates him as a humorist, as a friend, and as a symbol of his times.

Morley says he had a dream about MARQUIS in which MARQUIS said, "If we can only get out to the dunes it'll be all right." Regardless of the context of this statement in the dream, the import is unmistakable. The gently-chiding MARQUIS tossed people up in a blanket, but he always made sure to catch them, because he sensed the struggle, the imperfection, and the futility in his own life. And his works included in this volume reflect just that. A true humorist is one who sees things in a different light, a different relationship than most people, and in the process he sees more than most other people. His humor is a way of reconciling that hypersensitivity with the dirge of living. This MARQUIS does superbly.

What MARQUIS thinks of himself, what he can't stand, the hopes and fears of all his years are in this introduction, and it's a sweet-sad piece of writing that you will want to read even if you've read all of MARQUIS.

paul

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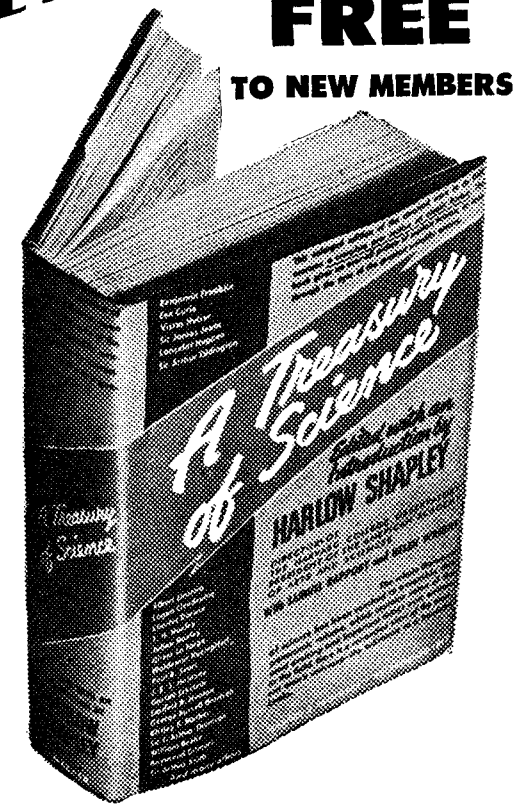

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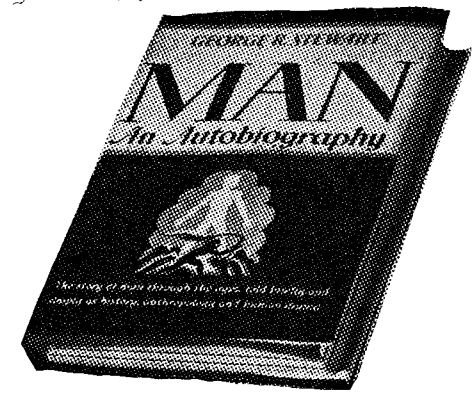

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Seeing Things

IN BIG BEN'S SHADOW

IT all depends upon what you are looking for, and where, and whether your search is conducted in peace or war.

At a charming little house in Suffolk which had once belonged to E. V. Lucas and was more recently owned by Hamish Hamilton, I chanced this summer to come across a *Carte Gastronomique* of France. My eyes were drawn by habit to that irregular bite in the Normandy coast which stretches from Pointe de Barfleur to Le Havre. More particularly they were drawn to the environs of Ste. Mère-Eglise, Isigny, and Port-en-Bessin. There was a time when all the world had watched, as well it might, what was happening on the beaches there.

Thinking back to the under-water obstacles, the land-mines, the barbed-wire, and the pill-boxes which our coxwains and GI's had been warned to notice as they approached those strips of France then known (and even now remembered) as "Utah" and "Omaha," I could not help wondering what the *Carte Gastronomique* would advise travelers to be on the lookout for. Somehow I suspected it would be different. It was. The *Carte Gastronomique* recommended: *la crême, le beurre, les oeufs.*

Although all three of these were missing in England this summer, something else was there. The lean times, the hardships of daily living, and the fatigue to which most people confessed, could not obscure it. It was in the air. It was also in almost everyone's living. It afforded a sustenance of its own. It was the unavoidable awareness of new life stirring in the old; of a Britain which continued to be traditionally British at the same time that she was being different in a very British way.

London, for example, was much as she had been even before the war. At least on the surface, and in spite of countless angry proofs of how the war had battered her. Her streets were clotted with traffic; her sidewalks bulged with pedestrians. The international array of uniforms was missing. So was the incessant scraping of heavy army boots. Yet she seemed as crowded as she was in wartime. She was a great sprawling city going unemotionally about a great city's business.

Her past was part of her present—the noblest part, visually. She did not have the shove and frenzy of New York or Chicago. She did not scream or roar in their fashion. She was old enough to modulate her voice and conserve her energies. Her traffic often moved at the pace of her drays. Her taxi drivers had lost neither their wonderful old cabs nor their manners. They negotiated their way through jam after jam without automatically challenging the legitimacy of their confreres.

Although London looked as tired as her people said they felt, her neatness persisted, as did theirs. Her sidewalks had a hand-washed appearance. They were unsullied by sudden, soft, dark spots as sidewalks can be only among a people not entirely converted to chewing gum. Her citizens did not discard papers wherever they happened to be. They still obeyed the signs on the rubbish containers; those signs which, because they read, "Deposit litter here," had caused many a smiling American soldier and sailor to wonder in wartime if British dogs could possibly be as amenable to regulations as their owners are.

Eros was not back in Piccadilly Circus early this summer, though his imminent return was rumored. His base was still boarded over, which meant that there was no perching place for flower vendors. These old women, who always looked as if they were waiting for Dickens or Shaw to write about them, were also among the missing.

So was Charles I from his pedestal just off Trafalgar Square. But the pigeons were there. They were dove-like enough never to have conceded the war's actuality. They still added non-regulation plumage to Nelson's hat. They still rested unconcernedly on Landseer's arrogant but patient lions. And flocked to the doors of the National Gallery without mustering the courage to enter even on Free Days. Or cooed and strutted around the fountains, and pecked at crumbs—for a wonder without queuing.

Although their scarlet coats and busbies of the pre-war days had not yet come out of storage, sentries were once again visible in the old familiar places. Before Marlborough House and St. James's, they either stomped their solitary paces—in khaki—or stood mummified by duty. Each morning, too, Christopher's Alice could have gaped at her fiancé—also in khaki—as the guard was changing at Buckingham Palace. In Whitehall the Horse Guards were once more, impressively if futilely, astride. The crowds which gathered each noon to stare at them seemed to find in them almost as reassuring proof of both continuity and survival as Britons did (yes, and aliens, too) when they passed Buckingham Palace and saw the royal standard flying.

The daily newspapers were not what they had been in bulk. Nor were they of that hernia-provoking heaviness to which we were accustomed here even during the war years when pulp was scarcest. They were four- or six-page affairs. Brevity had become the soul of news—a condition not without its merits.

Reports of acrimonious debates in Parliament, of the Labor Govern-

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NOCTURNE . . . . . PRELUDE #1 OPUS 28 Frederic Chopin
RONDO CAPRICCIOSO . . . . Felix Mendelssohn
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Directed by ROUBEN MAMOULIAN
Dances by AGNES de MILLE
with Harold Keel, Iva Withers, Jean Darling, Eric Mattson, Norma Howard, Jean Casto
MAJESTIC W. 44th St. Mats. Thurs. & Sat.

The Musical Hit
OKLAHOMA!
Based on Lynn Riggs' "Green Grow the Lilacs"
Music by RICHARD RODGERS
Book & Lyrics by OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN, 2nd
Directed by ROUBEN MAMOULIAN
Dances by AGNES de MILLE
Jack Kilty • David Burns • Betty Jane Watson • Ruth Weston
St. James Thea. W. 44. Mats. Thurs. & Sat.

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ALFRED LUNT • LYNN FONTANNE
"O Mistress Mine"
A New Comedy by TERENCE RATTIGAN
Directed by MR. LUNT
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Music and Lyrics by IRVING BERLIN
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with MYRON McCORMICK, MINOR WATSON, MARGALO GILLMORE
HUDSON, 44 St., E. of B'way. AIR-COND.

"A Very Big Hit!"—Walter Winchell
KERN AND HAMMERSTEIN'S
"Show Boat"
Music by JEROME KERN
Book and Lyrics by OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN 2nd
Based on the novel by EDNA FERBER
Staged by HASSARD SHORT
ZIEGFELD THEA. 54th St. & 6th Ave. Air-Cond.
Eves. 8:30 Sharp. Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:30 Sharp

ment's moves towards nationalization, of threatened shortages in food or soap, or crises in the coal industry, of great homes going to the National Trust, or discussion of a new charter for the BBC, fought for space with reports of what was happening in Paris or Palestine, in India or Egypt, in Russia and the United States, in Germany and Spain, in Italy or the Dominions, and in all the corners of the changed and shaken post-war world.

Yet, in spite of the tightness of the squeeze, room was also found for the old features. They abided unchanged and unshaken. They were as much a part of the England that is beyond politics as baseball, football, Hollywood, or hot murder stories are of America. There were those who found in them islands of safety from the dizzying flow of the new world's traffic.

The Court Circular, for example. It, at least, would have been comprehensible to Palmerston. This summer it was consoling to many cockneys who had never heard of him. Then, there were the "agony" columns. In them, as one of the more familiar paradoxes of the supposedly reserved British temperament, personal griefs continued to be made public without embarrassment on the front page by people who would have blushed to mention them in private.

Space was found, too, for those unvarying "letters to the editor." They discussed, as quaintly and gravely as they always had, such subjects as the pruning and propagation of roses, or hymned the wonders of the thrush or titmouse. Wimbledon, Henley, Ascot, and countless cricket or golf matches—these, of course, had their proper coverage. The theatre, which was booming, the ballet, art exhibitions, books, music, and the movies, all received intelligent attention, even if the daily reviews were bound to be truncated. And Sundays were made the more agreeable, just as they had been before the war and during it, because of the delight of reading James Agate, Charles Morgan, Desmond McCarthy, Harold Nicholson, Ernest Newman, and Ivor Brown.

Almost as if to prove that, after the vast abnormality of war, the times, however hard, had regained their normal aspects, a lot of precious space was given by the newspapers to two stories involving criminals. There were many others. But these stood out. They captured the nation's imagination. In their distressing though natural way, they were proofs that Britain was again at peace. A murder yarn grows in both credibility and fascination in proportion to the smallness of its cast. Death is hard for the average reader to comprehend when it

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—Clifton Fadiman, *Book-of-the-Month Club News.*

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comes to anonymous millions, in or out of uniform. But let it come violently to one individual, and that is a misfortune scaled to understanding.

As a relief from what they and the world had undergone and what Bikini threatened, Britons turned with relish to the slaying of Margery Gardner and Scotland Yard's search for the man last seen with her. English readers were no less diverted for a fortnight by the manhunt on the Isle of Wight for George Jackson, a convict who had escaped from Parkhurst Prison. Jackson's story was Galsworthy's "Escape" with this titillating difference. It was real.

No doubt Queen Alexandra would have been baffled by the opinions often brilliantly expressed in *The New Statesman* and *Spectator*. Had she lived, however, to turn the society pages of *The Illustrated London News*, *The Tatler*, or *The Sketch* this summer, she would have felt at home. The Edwardian touch was on them. They dealt with society as if Edward —and I don't mean Windsor—were still king. This was part of their validity.

As if to demonstrate what was uninterrupted in London's living, Hampstead Heath was crowded on a sunny Sunday. A few white ties were beginning to reappear in the fashionable hotels by night. The pubs were jammed. Passengers still smoked contentedly in the tubes and carried their dogs with them.

Christie's had been in full swing. A fine exhibition of French paintings had been held on Bond Street. A fairly representative American show was at the Tate. The National Gallery had once again hung some of its permanent exhibits. At the British Museum a breath-taking collection of Roman and early English jewels was to be seen. And, as an almost deliberate proof of the placidity of the English temperament, acre after acre of the uneventful canvases one expected to find at the Royal Academy were on display there.

By night London looked, if anything, more bruised than by day. It was then that a single building, or a cluster of buildings, on nearly every block remained unlighted because uninhabitable. The darkness made its own revelations. The absence of light meant not only the absence of life but the presence of war.

By day, however, the streets when they had not been blitzed beyond recognition, had about them much of their pre-war feeling. London, of course, would not be London without "My Goodness! My Guinness!" But there was no question about it—London *was* London. Triumphantly so. As the Abbey, Big Ben, the Palace, St. Paul's, and any number of landmarks (including every issue of *Punch*), proved. So, as goes without saying, "My Goodness! My Guinness!" was on the billboards.

The humor in many of the advertisements continued to sound like jokes which *Punch* had rejected. Looking down on Trafalgar Square, for instance, was a huge sign reading, "We Shall Have Moussec Wherever We Go." And bills on the backs of buses still demanded, "Did you MacLean Your Teeth Today?" The walls of underground stations announced cheeringly, "A Cradle May Rock But Not Your Plate. So-and-So's Denture Fixative Makes False Teeth Stay Put." But, hardened as I became to the humor in British advertising, I must admit that my eyes were surprised when, in an inflationary world, I saw on the back of a bus in Bond Street, "WOMAN—Every Week—3d." It took me some time to realize that what was being advertised was the English equivalent of our own *Ladies' Home Journal*.

But notwithstanding the countless features of London's living which were abiding, the changes made themselves felt. Some of us who were in England during the war were convinced then that she had undergone her greatest bloodless revolution since 1688. I became even more certain.

Britain had been totally at war and in the war. A nation that is in a target area has by that very fact had an

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MYSTERY THRILLER
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inescapable lesson in state socialism. Whatever else they may be, bombs are completely democratic. They are no respecters of persons, and do not distinguish between a hovel and a mansion. Britain, moreover, had been a totally drafted country. Which is lesson number two. Indeed, she had become a socialized state even when Mr. Churchill was her Prime Minister. This had eased the path not only for her Labor Government but for the way in which her citizens accepted it.

No occidental people so carry their past with them into the present as do the British. They have a past—in the long sense—as we do not. Their pride in their age equals our exultation in our youth.

Britain's titles, her forms, and many of the outward patterns of her previous existence may even now remain the same. Undoubtedly they will continue to do so, for many unpredictable decades to come. The British love of traditions is so deep-seated that they embrace anachronisms rather than smile at them. The Lord Mayor's show, the white wigs of their barristers and jurists, the beetle-like costume of Black Rod in the House of Lords, or the Cinderella gold of their monarch's state coach—these are only instances of the survivals to which the British cling happily. They take their having lasted as much for granted as they do the Tudor trappings of the Beefeaters, rejoicing in such proofs of continuity. Even among England's Labor leaders the urge to conserve seems to be as strong as the desire to tear down.

The humor and political maturity of the British was indicated by their treatment of Churchill. The very people who had voted him out of office cheered themselves hoarse whenever he appeared in person or on a newsreel. They differentiated between their past debts to him and their future hopes for their country. They were glad to have him out but were de-

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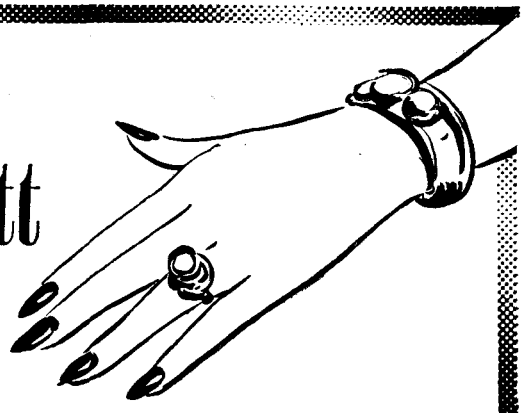

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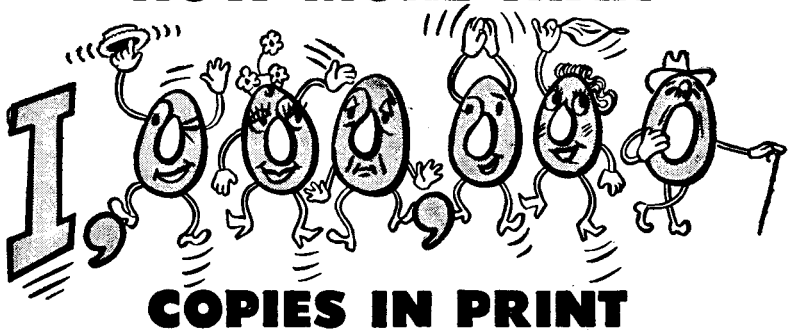

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lighted he had been in. They did not seem to be embittered by that blight of rabid partisanship which in this country Republicans and Democrats can feel for one another.

Do not misunderstand me. Not all the British were happy with their present government or the prospects of an increasingly socialized future. Far from it. The Colonel Blimps were outraged by what was happening. And several intelligent Tories with whom I talked were frankly alarmed. Yet persons of all parties and classes realized that the present government was apt to retain its power for another four years. Being British, hence practical, they, therefore, wanted it to succeed. They were well aware that its success or failure affected all their living. They did not want it to fail because it was the Opposition. They wanted it to succeed because it was *their* government.

Those close to the government contended that Russia would much prefer to have had Churchill in than Attlee. They suggested that the Soviets could not forgive the British for having presented Europe with a choice between communism and toryism. However that may be, one thing seems certain. The fiercest concern of the average Briton remained the survival of his individual liberties. Millions of Britons had found the promise of their liberties in their new government.

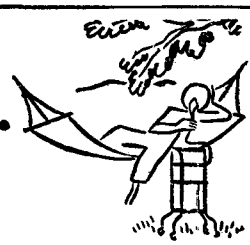
That government, because of its inheritance, may have been compelled to function as a compromise between feudalism and socialism. For a stranger it may have been hard to determine whether new ivy was growing on old walls, or old ivy on new walls. But the sense of growth was there. Unmistakably. Excitingly. And it gave one both faith and hope.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Byron: Don Juan.
2. Christina Rossetti: Goblin Market.
3. Lewis Carroll: The Mock Turtle's Song in Alice in Wonderland.
4. Pope: Second Book of Horace.
5. Chaucer: Prologue to Canterbury Tales.
6. A. A. Milne: The King's Breakfast.
7. W. S. Gilbert: Princess Ida.
8. Sydney Smith: A Recipe for a Salad.
9. Keats: The Eve of St. Agnes.
10. Coleridge: Kubla Khan.

For everyone who uses words . .



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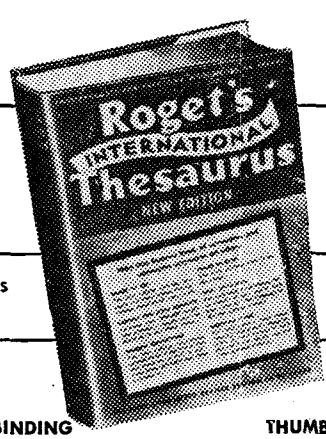

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Sixty Years' Indecision

THE FAMOUS CASE OF MYRA CLARK GAINES. By Nolan B. Harmon, Jr. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1946. 481 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by JAMES P. WOOD

THERE are two stories in this long and relentlessly detailed narrative. The first is that of Daniel Clark, who came to New Orleans from Philadelphia in 1786 when he was twenty-one years old. Before his death in 1813 he had attained enormous wealth and political eminence, having served as first American consul to the Spanish-ruled French city, then later as territorial representative in Congress.

The Irish-born Clark was a merchant prince, planter, and capitalist, a powerful figure in early New Orleans. He knew Aaron Burr, and some connected him with Burr's schemes of empire. He knew General James Wilkinson and testified against him in Richmond when Wilkinson's relationship with Spain was investigated by a court of inquiry. Much of the early history of New Orleans is brought into this story.

His public life was known. His private life was known in part, in part conjectured. Clark fell in love with the creole Zulime Carriere. Perhaps he married her in Philadelphia. One account says that he did. It was to be a chief point in dispute many years later. There were other complications, for Zulime had previously been married to a husband who appears and disappears several times in the story. Certainly Zulime's daughter Myra, brought up by Col. Samuel B. Davis, first in New Orleans, then in Delaware, was Clark's child.

Clark acknowledged her his legitimate child and left her the bulk of his great fortune in a will which he made shortly before his death. After his death that will could not be found; his partners produced a different one.

Now, the second and major story:

Not until the eve of her first marriage did the girl in Delaware learn of her parentage and begin to suspect that she had been defrauded of a great fortune. Almost immediately Myra took steps to discover the facts and present her claims to what she viewed as rightfully hers. Going to New Orleans, she began the long series of court battles intended to prove that her mother and father were married and that she was the legitimate heiress to the vast New Orleans properties.

Litigation begun in the Louisiana courts was soon before the Supreme

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Court of the United States. In 1848 the Supreme Court decided for Myra; in 1851, against her. In 1860 and again in 1867 it decided in Myra's favor. Final decision was made in 1891.

In summing up toward the end of the story, the author says the litigation "had run from 1836 and had been before the Supreme Court for over sixty years. Thirty justices had sat on it in one and another of its aspects, not to mention the numerous judges and officers of the state or Federal courts . . . one authority states that from first to last thirty lawyers 'if not more' were in Mrs. Gaines's service of whom seventeen died during employment." It was estimated that costs of the suits alone amounted to $250,000 and that $600,000 were paid by Mrs. Gaines as lawyers' fees.

The tracing of all this complicated litigation and legal manoeuvering should make "The Strange Case of Myra Clark Gaines" a dull story. Parts of it are dull, but the unusual interest of this story, which the author has based carefully on records and earlier printed accounts, survives. Attempts, especially in the earlier parts of the book, to enliven the characters by the fictional methods of retrospective thought reading and surmising of incidents are clumsy and unconvincing. Myra, however, stands out forthright, determined, indomitable, and even attractive in her chief role in what is said the Supreme Court once dubbed "the most remarkable case in the records of our country's courts."

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: NO. 168

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 168 will be found in the next issue.

GPA CRBPKDHAFCX EFAT

PLAPXBFDP DFPE BMKDPJ

NHXOFXS, WKCN ZTFXH AC

QPKM.

BHNMPG VCTXBCX—DHXFAJ

CW TMNHX EFBTPB

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 167

The louder he talked of his honor, the faster we counted our spoons.
RALPH W. EMERSON.

The Famous Case of Myra Clark Gaines

An incredible tale of Old New Orleans

by

NOLAN B. HARMON, JR.

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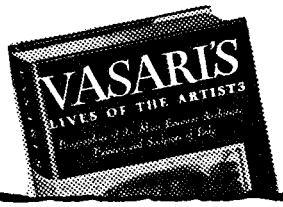

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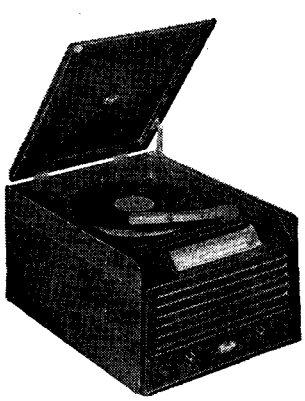

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CANADA BETWEEN COVERS

(Continued from Page 6)

have a wide appeal it must meet one or more of the following qualifications:

First, the region under examination should have familiar personal associations for the reader. Most people prefer dull books about themselves to good books about strangers.

Second, the region should present a problem which vitally affects the welfare of the whole nation. A novel about the Negro problem in Georgia has more appeal in any state in the union than it would have in Australia.

Third, a regional novel may satisfy a wide curiosity which the nation at large may have developed about itself. Through this kind of novel, the nation acquires an intimate, personalized knowledge of its various parts. This condition exists all over the United States today, as it did not exist fifty years ago.

Fourth, there is a kind of regional novel in which characteristics of a specific region find such broad focus that they appear in the eyes of the rest of the world to represent the entire nation. Such a book was "Babbitt." This was a novel which confined itself strictly to the costumes, dialect, folkways, and characters of a highly individual locale, and yet it was successful all over the world. It is questionable whether even Sinclair Lewis knows precisely why. Lewis rode to international fame on the international importance of the country whose secondary qualities he photographed with the eye of a candid camera. It happens to be vitally important for every literate person in the world to understand the United States in this century. And rightly or wrongly, Europeans—and perhaps Asiatics as well—believed that Lewis provided the understanding they craved. An Australian, Norwegian, or Canadian Sinclair Lewis would have received little or no audience outside his own country.

So we return to the question of Canada with respect to regional writing. Canada has many Babbitts. Canada has racial friction. Counterparts to the late George Apley live in Canada, too, but they live in Montreal and not in Boston, and what American would have the slightest interest in their peculiar manners? Canada even has her own great statesmen. Mr. Mackenzie King is one of the wisest public men of the century. Can Americans be made to feel anything but intense boredom at the mention of his name?

The obvious, and only, answer to this problem is for Canadian writers to stop writing regional novels, scientifically correct with respect to their own background, and permit themselves only universal themes, if they hope to reach a world audience and take their place in the branch cycle of American literature. That sounds simple enough. There are, thank God, no limits to the possibility of universal themes. So long as people are born, live, love, marry, hunger, suffer, have children, participate in happiness, and die, there will be a common denominator for all men. The Canadian writer dealing with such themes has two problems only: one is to understand them, the other is to make them clear to others.

But there rises another obstacle. In order to make his universal theme clear to others, he must overcome the restrictions which its setting imposes, and we are back again to regionalism. As I indicated when I used "Oedipus Rex" as an example of a universal subject, the story must be laid somewhere. And if a Canadian is to be successful in explaining Canada to herself, as well as to the rest of the world, he must place his universal theme in a Canadian background.

It can be done. It has been done. But it is a monstrously difficult problem. The Canadian novelist must realize that drama always proceeds from the known, not from the unknown. Therefore it devolves upon him to do more than invent his plot and create his characters, and throw in some scenery for a backdrop. He must be prepared to build the whole stage on which the action occurs. He must explain *all* the causes of conflict, not merely assume them to be known because they are a part of the local mores and then rely on his readers to supply the dramatic suspense. And all this he must weave unobtrusively into the framework of the story itself. He must likewise conquer his feeling of envy for his American colleague who can—at this point in the twentieth century—afford to ignore it.

Let me show you what I mean by a single example. If Lillian Smith had not been aware that the long shadow of a lynched Negro lies heavy over the conscience of all Americans, she could never have managed to begin her book as dramatically as she did, knowing that from the first page her readers would supply the background. She would have been forced to create that suspense herself, slowly, with infinite difficulty, building up its weight almost word by word. In short, she would have had to do what nearly every Canadian novelist must do with

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any subject he selects, no matter how universal its basic theme.

A Canadian enjoys none of the prestige of Sophocles, which impels students to study the footnotes of Sir Richard Jebb in order to see through the blur of local color to the clear light behind it. Canada may be respected, but no outsider feels it necessary for survival to understand the country. It is the Canadian writer's job to make his country interesting, to make it dramatic, and to show its intrinsic beauty and importance. And all the while, through the medium of a universal theme.

At this point it may be well to digress, for the purpose of answering the obvious reply to the obstacles I have built up for the Canadian writer. Let him ignore Canada entirely, if he must compete in the American market. Let him pretend to be an American, since it is easy enough for any Canadian to learn nearly everything about America that an American learns by reading about himself. The trick has been done, and other Canadians can always hope to get away with it.

The answer is easy, but it begs the whole question. Canada must be interpreted by her own, in the same way that Americans have held the mirror to their own country. What is still more important, a work of art is the product of the artist's personality, and the essence of a man's personality is formed before the age of ten. It is shaped by the people he grows up with, colored by their collective and individual points of view, enriched by its association with nature. In Canada the factors which form the personality are subtly different from such factors in the United States. They are hauntingly similar, yet always just sufficiently different to blur the focus. A Canadian writer, like any other artist, must write out of his own background.

Let me show you a few of these subtle differences. They are all pertinent to the Canadian writer's problems.

First, there is the time-lag which occurred in the development of Canada *vis-à-vis* the United States. Originally, both the United States and Canada were colonies of European powers, the one British, the other French. Then the United States declared its independence, and Canada, by one of history's major ironies, became British and continued as a colony for another century. Canada now has a system of representative popular government—mark this, those who still think of us as a colony—but we achieved it only by the middle of the nineteenth century.

The time-lag so notable in politics can be observed in many other institutions in Canada. The United States was industrialized, in the sense that industrial methods penetrated the thinking of the whole nation, several generations before Canada. The United States has always been the innovator in material progress, we the follower. Even in the climate there is a time-lag. Spring comes six weeks later to Montreal than it does to New York.

Nor is this the only major difference between the two great American countries divided by an undefended frontier. Canada has never attempted to turn herself into a melting pot. She has two official languages, French and English. The combination of tension and self-control which this "opposition in harmony" creates within Canada has resulted in a marked psychological trait observable at its highest development in Montreal. Montrealers are probably the most cautious, reserved, and tactful people in the world. The free-for-all give and take of New York social life would produce chaos in a city where two separate group-legends, one French and the other English, have to live side by side.

Consider also the historical background of the three main racial groups

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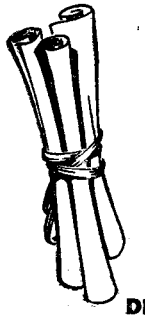

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which dominate Canadian society. None of the three, with the possible exception of the French, became Canadians from choice. The French were abandoned on the banks of the St. Lawrence by their own French king in the eighteenth century. Since then they have lived as a racial and linguistic island surrounded by people who speak English and learn English in their schools.

The second racial group in Canada was driven north, sorely against its will, after the American Revolution. In Canada these people were called United Empire Loyalists, and their descendants fondly preserve the title. They were a group of Englishmen twice transplanted: originally from the Old Country to the eastern states of America, then from New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia to the wilds of Ontario, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. In Canada they retained a tradition of blind loyalty to an England most of them had never seen, a loyalty which has made them to this day conservative and jealously proud of their original colonial status.

The third main group, the Highland Scotch, were ousted from Scotland after the Jacobite Rebellion to clear the land for hunting preserves for English lords. This group came to Canada because it had no other place to go. And these Highlanders, no less than the Loyalists, were for a long time content to remain colonials.

As different from one another as these groups may be by nature, they share a common psychological inheritance. Because they all became Canadians as a result of finding themselves on the losing side in war and politics, they are all cautious, conservative, and suspicious of change. They are intensely loyal by nature, to the group as well as to the King of England. Even the French-Canadians honor the King. Taking a natural part in North American progress, they still tend to distrust it, casting an eye back to the symbols of the old countries which have been handed down faithfully from father to son.

This intense conservatism, coupled with the time-lag which it abets, colors the whole Canadian scene. No Canadian writer can possibly avoid reflecting it. One aspect of it which must inevitably find its way into any contemporary Canadian novel of any scope is the Puritanism of the country. Even the Roman Catholic Church of Quebec is puritanical.

You see how subtly we differ from you even there. The first cracks in Puritanism in the United States appeared before 1900, and the first three decades of the present century witnessed a violent revolt against its creed, its manners, and its values. As a result, the United States today is a very different country from the United States of forty years ago. This revolution was reflected and expressed in a great surge of literature. It was recorded eloquently in the work of Sinclair Lewis, Eugene O'Neill, Sherwood Anderson, Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Dos Passos, and scores of others.

In Canada, Puritanism survived the first three decades of the century practically intact, and now it is threatened with exactly the same kind of revolt we have witnessed in the United States. Here is perhaps the most important theme for any Canadian writer today. Can he use it without appearing redundant, if he is to show his work in the American market?

I have reached a full circle, and find myself back to the original questions. I do not by any means believe that Canadian literature is doomed to lie half-stagnant in the backwaters of regionalism. I do believe it can take its place, if not in the mainstream of Western literature, at least in the vigorous branch of American culture. But only if Canadian writers are willing to face the problems I have outlined.

HUMAN beings are born in Canada, they suffer, love, marry, procreate, injure each other, and die, and so there are enough universal themes, even in Canada, for us all. One of us has proved this to be true. Gwethalyn Graham's "Earth and High Heaven," dealing with the relations between Jews and Gentiles in Montreal, sold more than a million copies and has been translated into ten languages. In this book Miss Graham did not solve all the problems I have outlined. She did not have to do so. For the Jews are the universal citizens of the world, and their problem is a world problem, the drama of their conflicts known to everyone. Miss Graham's Canadian coloring could not blur the focus of her theme.

Other Canadian writers would like to think of her success as a portent. At least it has proved one thing clearly to us all. If a Canadian can make a universal theme strike into the subconscious of his readers, he will have no trouble finding his place in the literature of the Western world. And when that happens not only once, but again and again, Canada will no longer be in search of herself. A mirror will have been held before her face, and the whole world will then see her as she is, a country rich, staunch, and of a beauty incredibly various, her life possessing a peculiar savor of its own, fortified by a quiet, latent energy which—without publicity and even without recognition by her allies—has made her at the present moment the fourth most powerful nation in the world.

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PIANO BACH

I DON'T believe that the keyboard works of Bach should be recorded on the piano. True, the piano is a universally available instrument, easily kept in condition, uncomplicated in the playing, conventionally used to play all sorts of music other than piano music *per se*. If we want to "play" a Bach chorale or investigate part of a symphony, a quartet, or a Schubert song, lacking the proper instruments we take the music to the piano to get a monochrome idea of it that is like a photograph—not the original, yet suggestive enough. True, also, that Bach is widely played on the piano by students and performers, notably in the traditional form of exercises, which in fact much of the Bach keyboard literature was intended to be.

Yet Bach did not write for the piano. To play the three-part "Inventions" is especially unfaithful, for the very term *pianoforte*—able to play soft or loud—is the antithesis of the three part "Inventions" structure—three individual melodies on rigid tonal planes, contrasted (on the harpsichord) not only in tone color (different sets of strings) but in *volume level*, that being one of the means of attaining clear distinction between voices on the harpsichord and organ.

Rightly understood, Bach on the piano is equivalent to the popular piano-four-hands or two-piano arrangements of orchestral works and the like. It takes good imagination to "hear" the sound of a symphony in a piano rendition, not to mention the playing itself. Some pianists are wizards at suggesting the orchestra by a kind of musical sleight of hand, in tones which quite obviously do not sound in the least like an orchestra, physically speaking. And so Bach on the piano can be beautiful too, given the right musical magician.

In fact here is a basic principle. Music is often enough a reflection of human emotions, but rarely a literal one, the parroting of emotional noises. Instead, music has its own system of emotional suggestion. It is not even necessary to be literal in creating actual musical sounds.

But be that as it may, only a pianist who knows the concrete possibilities in Bach's music as played on the harpsichord or even the clavichord is in a position to do Bach justice on the piano. Hence, no doubt, the quantity of execrable piano Bach that is heard, often from the most prominent of pianists, who in the egotism of their profession think the piano is the supreme interpreter of all keyboard music.

Only when the three-part "Inventions" are widely played and recorded in all the color and variety of registration possible on the harpsichord can a fair judgment be made of Mr. Balogh's excellent work.

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the Phoenix Nest

THE LATELY BRAVE

Even in death they cannot bear
to let him rest in silence where

we laid him: they would bring to shame
the proud remembrance of his name

among the host of us whose fate
he altered, and who called him great;

who saw in him in word and deed
a stern fulfillment of our need

in peace and war; who found him strong,
though sometimes weak, and often wrong,

yet always for the common good;
and we remember where he stood

amid the storm of vile abuse
when each man has his course to choose,

and all of these, and most of us
were merely pusillanimous,

while, cringing in our fear, we told
each other he was much too bold.

Now some forget what then they said,
since they have found him safely dead,

and heap their faults upon his grave
(these men become so lately brave).

LT. E. R. YOUNG, USNR.

* * *

For the benefit of John Wiggin of this city, who lives on my street, I reply to his inquiry below that "Autolycus" was, in this instance, the pseudonym of Leonard Bacon:

> Your mention of "Ulug Beg" in The Phoenix Nest recalled the many hours of delight and satisfaction I spent with that rascal. It reminded me too that I had tried several times to find out the name of the author, but without succeeding. It appears that Aldous Huxley in his younger days signed some essays as "Autolycus," but surely he couldn't have written "Ulug Beg," could he? I would be immensely gratified if you could take me off the peg after all these years and tell me who did.

* * *

José Garcia Villa wants me to mention *Viva*. He is looking for manuscripts, especially poetry, from new writers. The periodical *Viva* is distributed by New Directions, who will handle and receive all bookstore orders. Manuscripts, however, should be sent to José Garcia Villa at 404 West 115 Street, New York 25, N. Y. *Viva* is a quarterly anthology, and each issue is devoted to the consideration of an important living poet. Each issue also presents the new works of the leading poets in England and America, and has a New Writers' Section (poems and short stories) with an emphasis on poetry. In the fall of this year will appear an Edith Sitwell Number, in the coming winter a Marianne Moore Number, next spring an Ezra Pound Number, and next summer there will be a Dylan Thomas Number.

* * *

And here is a sonnet which I have held for too long a while. It was written by Harlan Roberson of Watson, Missouri, in honor of the Wright Brothers when their first flight began fateful world aviation:

> December [he wrote then] holds one of the most fateful anniversaries for America and the world—for good or for ill—that the modern world celebrates. If your column has space, I offer the following as memo. Title: "17 December, 1903."

Here the Icarian myth became bold deed
When, from a sand-blown dune on Kitty Hawk,
The homespun craft, the butt of idle talk
And jest, rode air and earthbound man was freed.
No portents fired the sky, no mystic creed
Confirmed the miracle, but on this rock
The future built. It shall survive the shock
Of sky-borne death, though war with science breed.

Go back five thousand years: you shall not find
Another tool so simple and so grand
Since first the wheel around its axle whirled,
Subduing earth; then, winged by cunning mind,
It soared above North Carolina sand—
The loneliest twelve seconds in the world.

* * *

The rhyme-mad correspondents are after me again. You have only to challenge them. Thus Palmer Vanderburgh of New York contributes the following:

Until her lahst, upholstered gahsp,
No wind could bend her wylph-
Ul, prideful waist, which all called wasp,
This un-pneumatic sylph.
She did not long endure fame's light.
A stay too short, due to stays too tight.

He also submits:

Perthimmonth, limeth, and lemonth,
Though you thpit out the pitth,
Will pucker up your kither, dunth,
And thoon reduth itth width.

—Which is ingenious, but I cannot admit it as an exact rhyme. But next Allan Abbott, of our fair Mannahatta, bursts into this:

"An atom for your thoughts, Delmuth."

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In Pleithtothene dayth, uth fellowth each month
Went hunting for the mathtodonth.

Lord Dundreary, with his lawst gawsp,
Struggled to catch a buzzing wasp;
And though he missed the wasp, perhaps
That was more gain than loss, perhaps.

A German maid—she was no sylph—
Called to a young G.I., "Hilf! Hilf!"

* * *

And thus Victor S. Yarros from La Jolla, California:

> Please devote one of these weeks a page of your corner to the debunking of those bores, the champions of "the simple style" and the enemies of clichés and tags. The latest of these is George Orville. He gives stale advice which he does not himself practise, as he is candid enough to own. He hates familiar idioms or sayings, despite the fact that they are often fresh and apt. And he confuses two distinct things—clear thinking and clear expression. Many people are vague because their thoughts are vague. Advice about the best use of language does them no good. Those who think straight and logically need not go to much trouble about right words and phrases. There is no rational objection to clichés, provided they enable one to say just what he means and wishes to say. There are few Carlyles, and few Shakespeares.
>
> Millions of people have said, "I love you," but to ladies these terribly hackneyed words have a fresh and lovely sound. To remind us that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely, is as pertinent and important now as it was when Acton first used the striking phrase. The "familiar quotations" are not to be shunned because they are familiar. Originality is precious, but wisdom is more precious.
>
> Let us attack error, prejudice, fallacies, libels, falsehood, and waste no time on trifles. Remember the man who said he had not enjoyed "Hamlet" on the stage because that play was full of familiar quotations.

* * *

Finally, Lee Richard Hayman of East Cleveland, Ohio, asks me:

> Don't you believe it would be extremely interesting and worthwhile to undertake a survey of Phoenix Nest readers, to determine the favorite among American living poets? It might help a bit, to start the ball rolling, to declare my choice: Robinson Jeffers. It tempts my fury to have a supposedly well-educated friend inquire: "Who's this fellow Jeffers? Never heard of him!" But then, perhaps, I've never heard of some of the poets who may be named in such a survey as proposed. . . . In any case, it seems to be a good idea.

. . . Do you think so, Lee? Now you really *have* started something!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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(Continued on page 34)

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PERSONALS

(Continued from page 33)

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 650

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

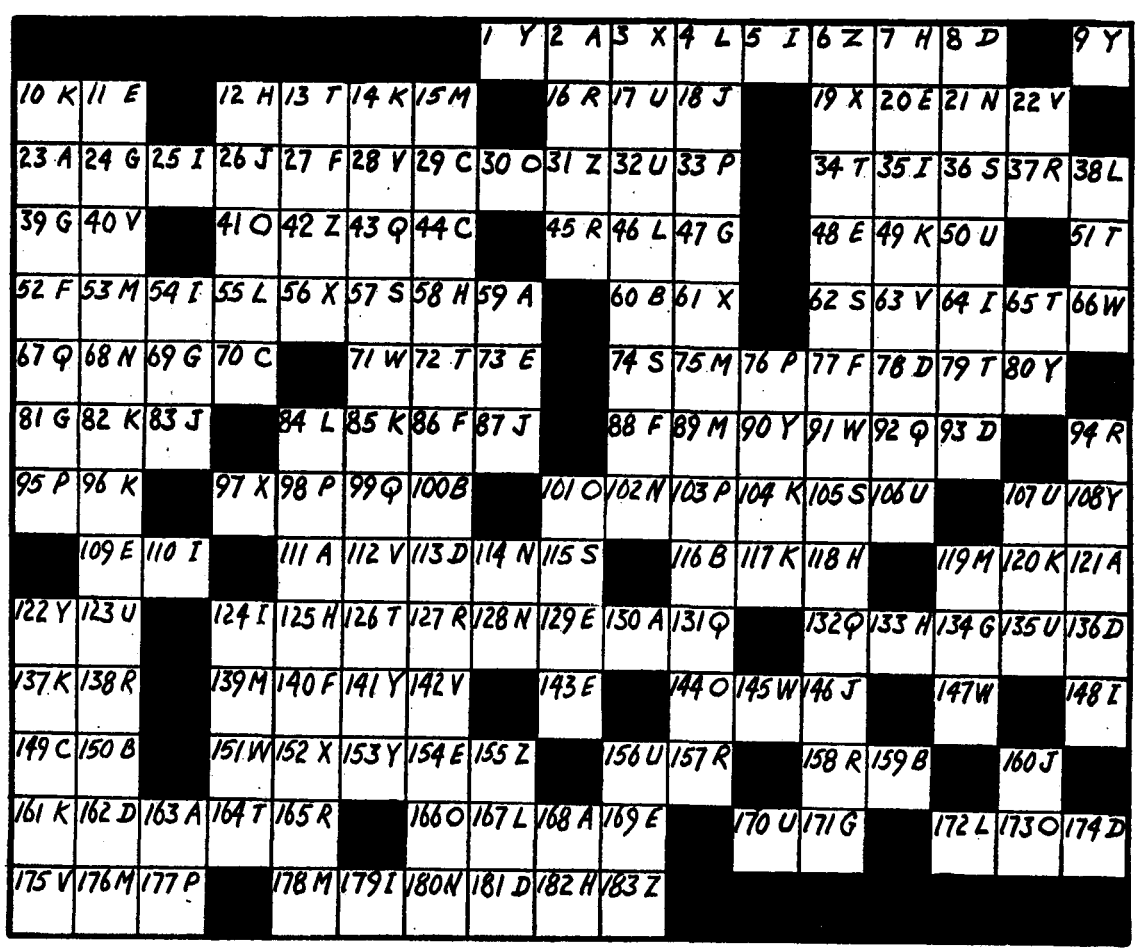
DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. An English breed of medium-sized white swine.	23 111 130 59 121 168 2 163
B. A miracle.	116 159 60 100 150
C. Viscous; glutinous.	44 149 29 70
D. Domain; seigniory.	174 136 162 181 8 93 78 113
E. Purely intellectual or cognitive.	73 169 143 11 48 20 109 129 154
F. Father of monsters like Cerberus, Chimera, etc. (Gr. and Rom. Myth.)	88 52 77 140 27 86
G. A cluster symbolic of additional honors (U.S. Army; Comp.)	24 81 134 47 39 69 171
H. Pricks as with a slender, pointed object.	133 125 182 118 12 58 7
I. Fustian.	124 179 25 148 35 64 54 5 110
J. Battle of 272 (Zenobia was defeated by the Romans).	83 26 87 18 146 160
K. Something worth knowing, telling, or the like (Colloq.; 3 wds.)	10 96 49 14 117 161 85 82 120 137 104
L. Vessels with foursided sails on yards hanging in a particular way.	46 38 4 84 55 167 172
M. A definite disclosure of facts, intentions, resources, etc.	53 89 119 139 15 75 178 176

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
N. In an emergency (2 wds.)	21 128 180 102 114 68
O. Hero of one of the "Jungle Books."	101 41 144 166 30 173
P. A purchaser or buyer (Law).	33 103 76 177 95 98
Q. Full of wrinkles.	67 132 92 99 131 43
R. To defile; corrupt.	158 138 37 127 16 94 45 165 157
S. Frizzed; brittle.	36 105 57 115 74 62
T. The goat who suckled Zeus (Gr. Myth.)	126 51 13 34 65 72 79 164
U. Dissection of dead bodies (Med.)	135 50 32 123 170 17 107 156 106
V. The digestive tract (Anat. and Zool.)	63 28 22 175 40 112 142
W. Needle-shaped; sharp-pointed.	147 151 91 145 71 66
X. Fled; took flight (2 wds.)	56 152 19 3 97 61
Y. The way to get around and do things or get things done (Slang; 2 wds.)	153 9 122 108 90 1 141 80
Z. Seaport city of France (With Le).	155 31 42 183 6

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 25 of this issue.

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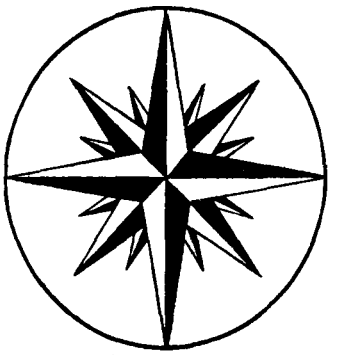

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